THE Grounds & Occasions OF THE CONTEMPT OF THE CLERGY AND RELIGION Enquired into.

In a LETTER *written to* R. L.

Gul: Grant

LONDON,
Printed by *W. G.* for *N. B.* at the *Angel* in *Cornhill*. 1671.

BRITISH MUSEUM
JAN
66

The PREFACE TO THE READER.

I Can very eaſily phanſie, that many upon the very firſt ſight of the Title, will preſently imagine, that the Author does either want the great Tithes, lying under the preſſure of ſome pitiful Vicaridge; or that he is much out of humour, and diſſatisfied with the preſent condition of Affairs; or laſtly, that he writes to no purpoſe at all, there having been an abundance of unprofitable Adviſers in this kind.

As to my being under ſome low Church Diſpenſation, you may know, I write not out of a pinching neceſſity, or out of any riſing Deſign; you may pleaſe to believe, that although I have

a most solemn reverence for the Clergy in general, and especially for that of England, *yet, for my own part, I must confess to you, I am not of that Holy Employment; and have as little thoughts of being* Dean *or* Bishop *as they that think so, have hopes of being all* Lord-Keepers.

Nor less mistaken will they be, that shall judge me in the least discontented, or any ways disposed to disturb the peace of the present settled Church. For in good truth, I have neither lost Kings nor Bishops Lands, that should incline me to a surly and quarrelsome complaining: As many be, who would have been glad enough to see His Majesty *restored, and would have endured Bishops daintily well, had they lost no Money by their coming in. I am not I'le assure you, any of those occasional Writers, that missing preferment in the University, can presently write you their new ways of Education; or being a little tormented with an ill chosen Wife, set forth the Doctrine of*

Di-

Divorce to be truly Evangelical: The cause of these few sheets was honest and innocent, and as free from all passion as any design.

As for the last thing which I supposed objected, viz. That this Book is altogether needlesse, there having been an infinite number of Church and Clergy Menders, that have made many tedious and unsuccesful offers. I must needs confesse that it were very unreasonable for me to expect a better reward. Only thus much I think with Modesty may be said; that I cannot at present, call to mind any thing that is propounded, but what is very hopefull, and easily accomplished. For indeed, should I go about to tell you, that a Child can never prove a profitable Instructor of the people, unlesse born when the Sun *is in* Aries; *or brought up in a School that stands full South; that he can never be able to govern a Parish, unless he can ride the great Horse; or that he can never go through the great Work of the*

Ministery, unlesse, for three hundred years backward it can be proved that none of his Family ever had Cough, Ague, or gray Hair; then I should very patiently endure, to be reckoned amongst the vainest that ever made attempt. But believe me, Reader, I am not as you will easily see, any contriver of an incorruptible and pure Crystaline Church; or any expecter of a Reign of nothing but Saints and Worthies: *But only an honest and hearty wisher, that the best of our Clergy might forever continue as they are, rich, and learned; and that the rest might be very useful, and well esteemed of in their Profession.*

THE

THE GROUNDS AND OCCASIONS OF THE *CONTEMPT* OF THE CLERGY and RELIGION, Enquired into.

SIR,

THat short Discourse, which we lately had concerning the Clergy, continues so fresh in your mind, that I perceive, by your last, you are more than a little troubled to observe that disesteem that lies upon

several

several of those holy Men. Your good wishes for the Church I know, are very strong and unfeigned, and your hopes of the World receiving much more advantage, and better advice, from some of the Clergy, than usually is found by Experience to do, are neither needless nor impossible. And as I have always been a devout admirer, as well as strict observer of your actions; so I have constantly taken a great delight to concur with your very thoughts.

Whereupon it is, Sir, that I have spent some few hours upon that which was the occasion of your last Letter, and the subject of our late discourse. And before Sir, I enter upon telling you what are my apprehensions; I must most heartily profess that for my own part I did never think, since at all I understood the excellency and perfection of a Church, but that Ours, now lately Reformed, formerly Established, does [illegible] to all Christian ends and

and purposes, either the pomp and bravery of *Rome* her self, or the best of *Free Spiritual States*. But if so be it be allowable, where we have so undoubtedly learned and honourable a Clergy, to suppose, that some of that sacred Profession, might possibly have attain'd to a greater degree of esteem and usefulnesse to the World; then I hope what has thus long hindred so great and desirable a Blessing to this Nation, may be modestly ghess'd at; either without giving any wilfull offence to the present Church; or any great trouble, dear Sir, to your self: And if I be not very much mistaken, what ever has heretofore, or does at present lessen the value of our Clergy, or render it in any degree less serviceable to the World than might be reasonably hoped, may be easily referred to two very plaine things; the *Ignorance* of some, and the *Poverty* of others of the Clergy.

And first, as to the *Ignorance* of some, of our Clergy; If we would make a

ſearch to purpoſe, we muſt go as deep as the very beginnings of Education; and doubtleſs, may lay a great part of our misfortunes to the old faſhion'd Methods and Diſcipline of Schooling its ſelf: Upon the well ordering of which although much of the improvement of our Clergy cannot be denyed mainly to depend; yet by reaſon this is ſo well known to your ſelf, as alſo, that there has been many of undoubted learning & experience, that have ſet out their ſeveral Models for this purpoſe: I ſhall therefore only mention ſuch loſs of time and abuſe of youth, and is moſt remarkable and miſchievous, and as could not be conveniently omitted in a diſcourſe of this nature, though never ſo ſhort.

And firſt of all, it were certainly worth the conſidering, whether it be unavoidably neceſſary to keep Lads to ſixteen or ſeventeen years of Age in pure ſlavery to a few *Latin* or *Greek* words? Or whether it may not be more convenient, eſpecialy if we

ca

call to mind their natural inclinations to eaſe and idleneſſe, and how hardly they are perſwaded of the excellency of the liberal Arts and Sciences, any further than the ſmart of the laſt piece of diſcipline is freſh in their memories; whether I ſay it be not more proper and beneficiall, to mix with thoſe unpleaſant tasks and drudgeries, ſomething that in probability might not only take much better with them, but might alſo be much eaſier obtained?

As ſuppoſe, ſome part of time was alotted them for the reading of ſome innocent *Engliſh* Authors; where they need not go every line ſo unwillingly to a tormenting Dictionary; and whereby they might come in a ſhort time to apprehend common ſenſe; and to begin to judge what is true: For you ſhall have Lads that are arch knaves at the Nominative Caſe, and that have a notable quick Eye at ſpying out the Verb, who for want of reading ſuch common and familiar books, ſhall underſtand no more of

what is very plain and easie, then a well educated Dog or Horse. Or suppose, they were taught (as they might much easier be, than what is commonly offered to them) the principles of *Arithmetick*, *Geometry*, and such alluring parts of Learning: As these things undoubtedly would be much more useful, so much more delightful to them, than to be tormented with a tedious story how *Phaeton* broke his Neck; or how many Nuts and Apples *Tityus* had for his Supper: For most certainly Youths, if handsomely dealt with, are much inclinable to Emulation, and to a very useful esteem of Glory, and more especially, if it be the reward of knowledge; and therefore if such things were carefully and discreetly propounded unto them wherein they might not only earnestly contend amongst themselves but might also see how far they out-skill the rest of the World; A Lad hereby would think himself high and might

mighty, and would certainly take great delight in contemning the next unlearned Mortal he meets withall. But instead hereof, you dict him with nothing but with Rules and Exceptions; with tiresome Repititions of *Amo's* and *τύπτω*; setting a day also apart to recite *verbatim* all the burdensome task of the foregoing week (which I am confident is usually as dreadfull as an *old Parliament Roll*) we must needs believe, that such a one thus managed, will scarce think to prove immortal by such performances and accomplishments as these. You know very well, Sir, that Lads in the general, have but a kind of ugly and odd conception of Learning, and look upon it as such a starving thing, and unnecessary perfection (especially as it is usually dispens'd out unto them) that Nine-pins and Span-counter are judged much more heavenly employments: And therefore what pleasure do we think can such a one take, in being bound to

get againſt break-faſt two or three hundred Rumblers out of *Homer*, in commendation of *Achilles*'s Toes, or the *Grecians* Boots? Or, to have meaſured out unto him, very early in the morning, fifteen or twentie well laid-on Laſhes, for letting a ſyllable ſlip too ſoon, or hanging too long upon it? Doubtleſſe, inſtant execution upon ſuch grand miſcarriages as theſe, will eternally engage him to a moſt admirable opinion of the *Muſes*.

Lads, certainly, ought to be won by all poſſible Arts and Divices, and though many have invented fine pictures and Games, to cheat them into the undertaking of unreaſonable burdens, yet this by no means is ſuch a laſting temptation, as the prepounding of that which in it ſelf is pleaſant and alluring: For we ſhall find very many, thogh of no excellingquickneſs, will ſoon percieve the deſign of the Landskip, and ſo looking through the vail, will then begin to take as little

delight

delight in those pretty contrivances, as in getting by heart three or four leaves of ungay'd nonsense.

Neither seems the stratagem of Morey to be so prevailing and catching, as a right down offering of such Books which are ingenious and convenient; there being but very few so intollerably carefull of their Bellies, as to look upon the hopes of a Cake, or a few Apples, to be a sufficient recompence for cracking their pates with a heap of independent words.

I am not sensible that I have said any thing in disparagement of those two famous Tongues, the *Greek* and *Latin*, there being much reason to value them beyond others; because the best of humane Learning has been delivered unto us in those Languages. But he that worships them, purely out of honour to *Rome* and *Athens*, having little or no respect to the usefulness and excellency of the Books themselves (as many do) it is a sign he has a great esteem and reverence

of Antiquity; but I think him by no means comparable for happineſs, to him who catches Frogs, or hunts Butterflies.

That ſome Languages therefore ought to be ſtudied, as in a manner abſolutely neceſſary, unleſſe all were brought to one (which would be the happieſt thing that the World could wiſh for;) but whether the beginning of them, might not be more inſenſibly inſtilled, and more advantagiouſly obtained, by reading Philoſophical, as well as other ingenious Authors, than *Janua Linguarum*'s crabbed Poems, and croſs-grain'd Proſe, as it has been heretofor by others, ſo it ought to be a-freſh conſidered by all well-wiſhers either of the Clergy or Learning.

I know where it is the faſhion of ſome Schools, to preſcribe to a Lad for his Evening refreſhment, out of *Commenius*, all the terms of Art belonging to *Anatomy*, *Mathematicks*, or ſome ſuch piece of Learning. Now,

it

it is not a very likely thing, that a Lad should take most absolute delight in conquiring such a pleasant Task, where, perhaps, he has two or three hundred words to keep in mind, with a very smal proportion of sense thereunto belonging; whereas the use and full meaning of all those difficult terms, would have been most insensibly obtained, but by leasurely reading in particular this, or the other Science? Is it not also likely to be very savoury, and of comfortable use, to one, that can scarce distinguish between Vertue and Vice, to be tasked with high and morall Poems? For Example: It is usualy said, by those that are intimately acquainted with him, that *Homer's Iliads* and *Odysses* contain mystically all the *Moral-Law* for certain, if not a greater part of the *Gospel* (I suppose much after the rate that *Rablais* said his *Garagantula* contained all the ten commandements) but perceivable only to those that have a Poetical discerning

ing Spirit; with which gift, I ſuppoſe, few at School are ſo early qualified. Thoſe admirable Verſes, Sir, of yours, both *Engliſh* and others, which you have ſometimes favoured me with a ſight of, will not ſuffer me to be ſo ſottiſh, as to ſlight or undervalue ſo great and noble an Accompliſhment. But the committing of ſuch high, and brave ſens'd Poems to a School-boy, whoſe main buſineſſe is to ſearch out cunningly the Antecedent and the Relative, to lie at catch for a ſpruce Phraſe, a Proverb, or a quaint and pithy ſentence, is not only to very little purpoſe, but that having gargl'd only thoſe elegant Books at School, this ſerves them inſteed of reading them afterward, and does in a manner prevent their being further lookt into: So that all that improvement, whatſoever it be, that may be reap'd out of the beſt and choiceſt Poets, is for the moſt part utterly loſt; in that a time is uſually choſen of reading them

them when discretion is much wanting to gain thence any true advantage. Thus that admirable and highly useful Morality, *Tulli's Offices*, because it is a Book commonly construed at School, is generally afterwards so contemn'd by *Accademicks*, that it is a long hours work to convince them, that it is worthy of being look'd into again, because they reckon it as a Book read over at Shool, and no question notably digested.

If therefore the ill methods of Schooling does not onely occasion a great loss of time there, but also does beget in Lads a very old opinion and apprehension of Learning, and much dispose's them to be idle, when got a little free from the usuall severities; and that the hopes of more or less improvement in the Universities, very much depend hereupon, it is without all doubt, the great concernment of all that wish well to the Church, that such care

and regard be had to the manage-ment of Schools, that the Clergy be not so much obstructed in their first attempts and preparations to Learning.

I cannot (Sir) possibly be so ignorant, as not to consider, that what has been now offer'd upon this Argument, has not only been largely insisted on by others, but also refers not particularly to the Clergy (whose welfare and esteem I seem at present in a speciall manner sollitious about) but in generall to all learned Professors, and therefore might reasonably have been omitted; which certainly I had done, had I not call'd to mind, that of those many, that propound to themselves Learning for a Profession, there is scarce one often, but that Hilot, choice, or necessity, determines him to the study of Divinity.

Thus, Sir, I have given you my thoughts concerning the Orders and Customs of common Schools: A consideration in my apprehension not slightly

slightly to be weighed; being that to me seems hereupon very much to depend the Learning and Wisdom of the Clergy, and the Prosperity of the Church.

The next unhappinesse, that seems to have hindred some of our Clergy from arriving to that degree of understanding, that becomes such an holy office, whereby their Company and Discourses might be much more than they commonly are valued and desired, is, The inconsiderate sending of all kind of Lads to the Universities, let their parts be never so low and pitifull, the instructions they have lain under never so mean and contemptible, and the Purses of their Friends never so short to maintain them there. If they have but the commendation of some lamentable and pittifull Construing Master, it passes for sufficient evidence, that they will prove persons very eminent in the Church. That is to say, if a Lad hat but a lusty and well-bear-

ing

ing Memory (this being the usuall and almost only thing whereby they judge of their abilities) if he can sing over very tunably three or four stanza's of *Lilli's* Poetry, be very quick and ready to tell what's *Latin* for all the Instruments belonging to his Fathers Shop; if presently, upon the first scanning, he knows a *sponde* from, a *dactyl*, and can fit a few of those same, without any sense, to his fingers ends; if lastly, he can say perfectly by heart his Academick Catechism, in pure and passing *Latin*, *i. e. What is his Name? Where went he to School? and What Author is he best and chiefly skill'd in?* A forward Boy, cries the School-Master, a very pregnant Child! ten thousand pities, but he should be a Schoolar; He proves a brave Clergy-man, I'll warrant you. Away to the University he must needs go; then for a little *Logick*, little *Ethicks* and God knows a very little of every thing else, and the next time you meet him it is in the Pulpit. Neither

Neither ought the miſchief which ariſes from ſmall Countrey-Schools to paſſe unconſidered; the little mighty Governours whereof, having, for the moſt part, not ſuck'd in above ſix or ſeven months full of the Univerſity Air, muſt yet by all means ſuppoſe themſelves ſo notably furniſhed with all ſorts of Inſtructions, and are ſo ambitious of the glory of being counted able to ſend forth now & then to *Oxford* or *Cambridge*, from the little Houſe by the Church-yard ſide, one of their illeducated Diſciples, that to ſuch as theſe oft-times is committed the guidence and inſtruction of a whole Pariſh: whoſe parts and improvements duely conſidered, will ſcarce render them fit Governours of a ſmall Grammar-Caſtle. Not that it is neceſſary to be believe, that there never was a learned or uſefull Perſon in the Church, but ſuch whoſe education had been at *Weſtminſter* or *St Paul's*: But, whereas moſt of the ſmall Schools, being by their

their first Founders design'd only for the advantage of poor Parish-Children; and also that the stipend is usually so small and discouraging, that very few, who can do much more than teach to write and read, will accept of such Preferment; for these that pretend to rig out their small ones for an University Life proves oft-times a very great inconvenience and dammage to the Church.

And as many such dismall things are sent forth thus with very small tackling, so not a few are predestinated thither by their Friends, from the foresight of a good Benefice. If there be rich Pasture, profitable Customs, and that *Henry* the Eighth has taken out no Toll; for the Holy Land is a very good Land, and affords abundance of Milk and Honey: Far be it from their Consciences the considering whether the Lad is likely to be serviceable to the Church, or to make wiser and better any of his parishoners.

All

All this may seem at first sight to be easily avoided by a strict examination at the Universites, and so returning by the next Carrier all that was sent up not fit for their purpose. But because many of their Relations are oft-times persons of an inferiour Condition; and who either by imprudent Counsellours, or else out of a trickling conceit of their Son's being, forsooth, an Universty Scholar, have purposely omitted all other opportunities of a livelyhood, to return such, would seem a very sharp and severe disappointment. Possibly it might be much better, if Parents themselves, or their Friends, would be much more wary of determining their Children to the Trade of Learning. And, if some of undoubted knowledge and judgment, would offer their advice, and speak their hopes of a Lad about thirteen or fourteen years of Age: (which I'll assure you, Sir, may be done without conjuring:) and never omit to en-

quire, whether his Relations are able and willing to maintain him seven years at the University, or see some certain way of being continued there so long, by the help of Friends, or others; as also upon no such conditions, as shall in likelyhood deprive him of the greatest part of his Studies.

For it is a common fashion of a great many to compliement, and invite inferior Peoples Children to the University, and there pretend to make such an all-bountiful provision for them, as they shall not fail of coming to a very eminent degree of Learning: But when they come there, they shall save a Servants Wages. They tooke therefore heretofore a very good method to prevent Sizars over-heating their Brains Bed-making, Chamber-sweeping, and Water-fetching, were doubtless great preservatives against too much vain Philosophy. Now certainly such pretended favours and kindnesses as

thes

these, are the most right down discourtesies in the World. For it is ten times more happy, both for a Lad and for the Church to be a corn-cutter, or Tooth-drawer, to make or mend Shooes, or to be of any inferiour profession, than to be invited to, and promised the Conveniences of a learned Education, and to have his Name only stand airing upon the College Tables, and his chief businesse shall be to buy Eggs and Butter.

Neither ought Lads parts, before they be determined to the University be only considered, and likly-hood of being disappointed in their Studies, but also Abilities or hopes of being maintain'd untill they be Masters of Arts. For whereas two hundred, for the most part, yearly Commence, scarce the fifth part of these continue after their taking the first degree. As for the rest, having exactly learned, *Quid est Logica?* and *Quot sunt Virtutes Morales?*

down they go by the first Carrier, upon the top of the Pack into the West, or North, or elsewhere, according as their Estates lye, with *Burgesdicius*, *Eustachius*, and such great helps of Divinity; and then for Propagation of the Gospel. By that time, they can say the *Predicaments* and *Creed*, they have their Choice of Preaching, or Starving. Now, what a Champion for Truth is such a thing likely to be? What an huge blaze he makes in the Church? What a Raiser of Doctrines, what a Confounder of Heresies, what an able Interpreter of hard Places, what a Resolver of Cases of Consciences, and what a prudent Guide must he needs be to all his Parish?

You may possibly think, Sir, that this so early Preaching might be easily avoided, by with-holding Holy Orders: the Church having very prudently constituted in Her Canons that none under Twentie three Years of Age (which is the usuall Age, after seven Years being at the University

verſity) ſhould be admitted to that great Employment.

This indeed might ſeem to do ſome ſervice, were it carefully obſerved; and were there not a thing to be got, called a Diſpenſation, which will preſently make you as old as you pleaſe.

But if you will, Sir, we'll ſuppoſe that Orders were ſtrictly denyed to all, unleſs qualifyed according to Canon. I cannot foreſee any other Remedy, but that moſt of thoſe Univerſity Youngſters muſt fall to the Pariſh, and become a Town Charge, untill they be of Spiritual Age. For *Philoſophy* is a very idle thing, when one is cold: And a ſmall Syſtem of *Divinity* (though it be *Wollebius* himſelf) is ſufficient when one is hungry. What then ſhall we do with them, and where ſhall we diſpoſe of them until they come to a holy Ripeneſs? May we venture them into the Desk to Read Service? that cannot be, becauſe not capable: Beſides, the tempting Pulpit uſually ſtands too near. Or, ſhall we

trust them in some good Gentlemens houses, there to perform holy Things? Withall my heart, so that they may not be called down from their Studies to say Grace to every Health: That they may have a little better Wages than the *Cook* or *Butler*: As also that there be a *Groom* in the House, besides the *Chaplain*: (For sometimes unto the Ten pounds a year, they crowd the looking after a couple of Geldings:) And that he may not be sent from Table, picking his Teeth, and sighing with his hat under his Arm, whilst the *Knight and my Lady* eat up the Tarts and Chickens: It may be also convenient, if he were suffered to speak now and then in the Parlour, besides at Grace and Prayer time: And that my Cosen *Abigail* and he sit not too near one another at Meals: Nor be presented together to the little Vicarage. All this, Sir, must be thought of: For, in good earnest, a Person, at all thoughtfull of himself and Conscience, had much better chuse to live with nothing

thing but Beans and Peaſe-Potage (ſo that he may have the command of his thoughts and time) than to have his ſecond and third Courſes, and to obey the unreaſonable humours of ſome Families.

And, as ſome think, two or three years continuance in the Univerſity, to be time ſufficient for being very great Inſtruments in the Church; ſo others we have ſo moderate, as to count that a ſolemn admiſſion, and a formal paying of Colledge-Detriments, (without the trouble of Philoſophical Diſcourſes, Diſputations, and the like) are Virtues that will influence as far as *Newcaſtle*, and improve, though at never ſuch a diſtance.

So ſtrangely poſſeſſed are People in general, with the eaſineſs and ſmall Preparations that are requiſite to the Undertaking of the Miniſtry, that, whereas in other Profeſſions they plainly ſee what conſiderable time is ſpent, before they have any hopes of arriving to skil enough to practiſe,

with any confidence, what they have design'd; yet to preach to ordinary People, and govern a Country-Parish, is usually judg'd such an easie performance, that any body counts himself fit for the Employment. We find very few so unreasonably confident of their parts, as to profess either *Law*, or *Physick*, without either a considerable continuance in some of the *Inns of Courts*, or an industrious search in Herbs, Anatomy, Chymistry, and the like; unless it be only to make a Bond, or give a Glyster. But, as for the knack of Preaching, as they call it, that is such a very easie attainment, that he is counted dull to purpose that is not able at a very small warning, to fasten upon any Text of Scripture; and to tear and tumble it till the Glass be out. Many, I know very well, are forced to discontinue, having neither stock of their own, nor Friends to maintain them in the University. But, whereas a Man's Profession and Employment in this World, is very much

in

in his own, or in the Choice of such who are most nearly concern'd for him: He therefore that foresees that he is not likely to have the advantage of a continued Education, he had much better commit himself to an approved-of Cobler or Tinker, wherein he may be duly respected according to his Office and condition of Life, than to be only a disesteemed *Pettifogger*, or *Empyrick* in Divinity.

By this time, Sir, I hope you begin to consider, what a great disadvantage it has been to the Church and Religion, the meer venturous and inconsiderate determining of Youths to the profession of Learning.

There is still on thing, by very few at all minded, that ought also not to be overlooked; and that is, a good Constitution, and Health of Body. And therefore discret and wise Physicians ought also to be consulted, before an absolute Resolve be made to live the Life of the Learned. For he that has strength enough to buy and

bargain, may be of a very unfit habit of body to sit still so much, as in general is requisite, to a competent degree of Learning: For although reading and thinking, breaks neither Legs nor Arms, yet certainly there is nothing that flags the Spirits, disorders the Blood, and enfeebles the whole Body of Man, as intense Studies. As for him that rives Bloks, or carries Packs, there is no great Expence of Parts, no Anxietie of Mind, no great Intellectuall pensiveness: Let him but wipe his Forehead, and he is perfectly recovered. But he that has many Languages to remember; the Nature almost of the whole World to consult, many Histories, Fathers, and Councils to search into, if the Fabrick of his body be not strong and healthful, you will soon find him as thin as a peice of *Metaphysicks*, and look as piercing as a School subtlety. This, Sir, could not be conveniently omitted: not only, because many are very careless

less in this point, and at a venture determine their young Relations to Learning; but because, for the most part, if amongst many, there be but one of all the Family that is weak and sickly, that is languishing and consumtive, this of all the rest, as counted not fit for any course Employment, shall be pick'd out as a choice Vessel for the Church: Whereas most evidently, he is much more able to dig daily in the Mines, than to sit cross-legg'd musing upon his Book.

I am very sensible, how obvious it might be here to hint, that, this so curious and severe Inquiry would much hinder the Practice, and abate the flourishing of the Universities: As also, there has been several, and are still many living Creatures in the world, who, whilst young, were of a very slow and meek apprehension, have yet afterward cheared up into a great briskness, and became Masters of much Reason: And others there have

been, who, although forced to a short continuance in the University, and that oft-times interrupted by unavoidable services, have yet by singular care and industry, proved very famous in their Generation: And lastly, some also of very feeble and crasie Constitutions in their Child-hood, have out-studied their distempers, and have become very healthful and serviceable in the Church.

As for the flourishing, Sir, of the Universities; what has been before said, aims not in the least at Gentlemen, whose coming thither is chiefly for the hopes of single improvement, and whose Estates do free them from the necessity of making a gain of *Arts* and *Sciences*; but onely at such, as intend to make Learning their Profession, as well as accomplishment: So that our Schools may be still as full of Flourishings, of fine Cloaths, rich Gowns, and future Benefactors, as ever. And suppose we do imagine, as it is necessary we

should

ſhould, that the Number ſhould be a little leſſen'd; this ſurely will not abate the true ſplendour of an Univerſitie in any Man's Opinion, but his, who reckons the flouriſhing thereof, rather from the multitude of meer Gowns, than from the Ingenuity and Learning of thoſe that Wear them; no more than we have reaſon to count the flouriſhing of the Church from that vaſt number of People that crowd into Holy-Orders, rather than from thoſe Learned and uſefull perſons that defend her Truths, and manifeſt her Wayes.

But, I ſay, I do not ſee any perfect neceſſity, that our Schools ſhould hereupon be thinn'd and leſs frequented; having ſaid nothing againſt the Multitude, but the indiſcreet Choiſe. If therefore, inſtead of ſuch either of inferiour Parts, or a feeble Conſtitution, or of unable Friends, there were picked out thoſe that were of a tolerable Ingenuity, of a ſtudy-bearing body, and had good hopes of being continued; as hence there is nothing

to hinder our Universities from being full, so likewise from being of great Credit and Learning.

Not to deny then, but that now and then there has been a Lad of very submissive Parts, and perhaps no great share of time allow'd him for his Studies, who have proved, beyond all expectation, brave and glorious: Yet surely we are not to overreckon this so rare a bite, as to think that one such proving Lad, should make recompense and satisfaction for those many weak ones (as the common People love to phrase them) that are in the Church. And that no care ought to be taken, no choice made, no Maintenance provided or considered, because, now and then in an Age, one miraculously, beyond all hopes, proves learned and useful is a Practise, whereby never greater Mischiefs, and disesteem has been brought upon the Clergy.

I have in short, Sir, run over, what seemed to me, the first Occasi-

ons

ons of that ſmall learning, that is to be found amongſt ſome of the Clergy, I ſhall now paſſe from Schooling to the Univerſities.

I am not ſo unmindful of that Devotion which I owe to thoſe places, nor of that great eſteem I profeſſe to have of the Guides and Governours thereof, as to go about to preſcribe new Forms and Schemes of Education, where Wiſdom has laid her Topſtone. Neither ſhall I here examine which Philoſophy, the old or new, makes the beſt Sermons; it is hard to ſay that Exhortations can be to no purpoſe, if the Preacher believes that the Earth turns round: Or, that his Reproofs can take no effect, unleſs he will ſuppoſe a *Vacuum*. There has been good Sermons, no queſtion, made in the days of *Materia Prima*, and *Occult Qualities*: and there is doubtleſs, ſtill good Diſcourſes now under the Reign of *Atoms*.

There is but two things wherein I count the Clergy chiefly concerned

(as

(as to Univerſity Improvements) that at preſent I ſhall venture to make Inquiry into.

And the firſt is this; Whether or no it were not highly uſeful (eſpecially for the Clergy, who are ſuppoſed to ſpeak *Engliſh* to the People) that *Engliſh* Exerciſes were impoſed upon Lads, if not in publick Schools, yet at leaſt privately. Not, but that I am abundantly ſatisfied that *Latin*, O *Latin!* 'tis thee all in all, and the very Cream of the Jeſt: As alſo, that Oratory is the ſame in all Languages: The ſame Rules being obſerved, the ſame Method, the ſame Arguments and Arts of perſwaſion; But yet it ſeems ſomewhat beyond the reach of ordinary Youth, ſo to apprehend thoſe general Laws, as to make a juſt and allowable uſe of them in all Languages, unleſſe exerciſed particularly in them. Now, we know, the Language that the very Learned part of this Nation muſt truſt to live by, unleſs it be to make a Bond, or preſcribe

a Purge

a Purge (which possibly may not oblidge or work so well in any other Language as *Latine*) is the *English*. And after a Lad has taken his leave of Madam University, God bless him, he is not likely to deal afterward with much *Latine*; unless it be to checker a Sermon, or to say *Salveto* to some travelling *Dominatio Vestra*. Neither is it enough to say, that the English is the Language with which we are swadled and rock'd asleep, and therefore there needs none of this artificial and superadded care. For there be those that speak very well, plainly, and to the purpose, and yet write most pernicious and phantasticall stuff: Thinking, that whatsoever is written, must be more than ordinary, must be beyond the guise of common speech, must savour of Reading and Learning, though it be altogether needless, and perfectly ridiculous.

Neither ought we to suppose it sufficient, that English Books be frequently

quently read; because there be of all sorts good and bad (and the worst are likely to be admired by Youth more than the best) unless Exercises be required of Lads, whereby it may be guessed what their judgment is, where they be mistaken, and what Authors they propound to themselves for imitation. For by this means they may be corrected and advised early, according as occasion shall require: Which if not done, their ill stile will be so confirmed, their impropriеties of speech will become so naturall, that it will be a very hard matter to stir or alter their fashion of Writing. It is very curious to observe, what delicate Letters your young Students write after they have got a little smack of University-Learning! In what elaborate heights, and tossing nonsence will they greet a right-down-*English* Father, or Country Friend! If there be a plain word in it, and such as is used at home, this tasts not, say they, of Education among

among Philosophers, and it is counted damnable Duncery and want of Phansie: Because, *Your loving Friend*, or *Humble servant*, is a common phrase in Country-Letters; therefore the young *Epistler* is *yours to the Antipodes*, or at least to the *Centre of the Earth*; and because ordinary folks *love* and *respect* you, therefore you are to him the *Pole Star*, a *Jacob's staffe*, a *Load-stone*, and a *Damask-Rose*.

And the misery of it is, this pernicious accustom'd way of expression, does not only oft-times go along with them to their Benefice, but accompanies them to the very Grave: And for the most part an ordinary Cheese-munger or Plum-seller, that scarce ever heard of an University, shall write much better sense, and more to the purpose than these young Philosophers, who injudiciously hunting only for great words, make themselves learnedly ridiculous.

Neither can it be easily apprehended,

ded, how the use of *English* Exercises should any ways hinder the improvement in the *Latin* Tongue; but rather be much to its advantage: And this may be easily believed, considering what dainty stuff is usually produced for a *Latin* Entertainment. Chicken-broath is not thinner than that which is commonly offered for a piece of most pleading and convincing sense. For, I'll but suppose an Academick Youngster to be put upon a *Latin* Oration: Away he goes presently to his Magazin of collected *Phrases*; he picks out all the *Glitterings* he can find; he hales in all *Proverbs*, *Flowers*, *Poetical Snaps*, Tales out of the *Dictionary*, or else ready *Latin'd* to his hand out of *Licosthenes*: This done, he comes to the end of the Table, and having made a submissive Leg, and a little admir'd the number, and understanding countenances of his Auditors (let the subject be what it will) he falls presently into a most *lamentable complaint of his insuf-*

insufficiency and tenuety: That he, poor thing, have no acquaintance with above a Muse and half; and that he never drunk above size-q: of Helicon, *and you have put him here upon such a task* (perhaps the businesse is only, which is the noblest Creature, a Flea or a Louse) *that would much better fit some old soker at* Parnassus, *than his sipping unexperienc'd Bibbership. Alas, poor Childe! he is sorry at the very soul that he has no better speech; and wonders in his heart, that you will lose so much time as to hear him: For he has neither Squibs nor Fireworks, Stars nor Glories; the cursed Carrier lost his best Book of Phrases, and the malicious Mice and Rats eat up all his Pearls and Golden Sentences:* Then he tickles over a little the skirts of the Businesse, By and by, for similitude from the *Sun* or *Moon*; or if they be not at leisure, from the *grey-ey'd Morn*, a *shady Grove*, or a *purling Stream*: This done, he tells you, *that* Barnaby-

bright

bright *would be much too short for him to tell you all that he could say; and so fearing he should break the thread of your patience*, he concludes.

Now it seems, Sir, very probable, that if Lads did but first of all determine in *English*, what they intend to say in *Latin*, they would of themselves soon discern the triflingness of such Apologies, the pittifulnesse of their matter, and the impertinency of their Tales and Phansies, and would according to their subject, age and parts, offer that which would be much more manly, and towards tolerable sense. And if I may tell you, Sir, what I really think, most of that Rediculousness, phantastical Phrases, harsh and sometimes blasphemous Metaphors, abundantly foppish Similitudes, childish and empty Transitions, and the like, so commonly uttered out of Pulpits, and so fatally redounding to the discredit of the Clergy, may in a great measure be charg'd upon the want of that

which

which we have here so much contended for.

The second Inquiry that may be made, is this: Whether or no Punning, Quibling, and that which they call Joquing, and such other delicacies of Wit, highly admired in some Accademick Exercises, might not be very conveniently omitted? For one may desire but to know this one thing: In what Profession shall that sort of Wit prove of advantage? As for *Law*, where nothing but the most reaching Subtilty, and the closest Arguing is allow'd of, it is not to be imagined, that blending now and then a piece of a dry Verse, and wreathing here and there an old *Latine* Saying into a dismall Jingle; should give Title to an Estate, or clear out an Obscure evidence. And as little servicable can it be to *Physick*, which is made up of severe Reason, and well-tryed Experiments. And as for *Divinity*, in this place I shall say no more, but that those usually that have

been

been Rope-dancers in the Schools, oft-times prove *Jack-puddings* in the Pulpit. For he that in his youth has allow'd himself this liberty of Accademick Wit, by this means he has usually so thinn'd his judgment, becomes so prejudiced against sober sense, and so altogeher disposed to trifling and jingling; that so soon as he gets hold of a Text, he presently thinks he has catched one of his old School-questions; and so falls a flinging it out of one hand into the other, tossing it this way and that; lets it run a little upon the Line, then *tantus, heigh jingo come again*; here catching at a word, there lie niblingand sucking at an *and*, a *by*, a *quia*, or a *quid*, a *sic*, or a *secus*; and thus minces the Text so small, that his Parishoners, until he rendevouz it again, can scarce tell what's becomc of it.

But, *shall we debar Youth of such an innocent and harmless Recreation, of such a great quickner of parts, & promoter of Sagacity?* As for the first, its in-

no-

nocency of being allow'd of for a time, I am so far from that perswasion, that from what has been before hinted, I count it perfectly contagious, and as a thing that for the most part infects the whole life, and influences upon most actions. For he that finds himself to have the right knack of letting off a Joque, and of pleasing the Humsters, he is not only very hardly brought off from admiring those goodly applauses, and heavenly shouts, but it is ten to one if he directs not the whole bent of his Studies to such idle and contemptible Books, as shal only furnish him with Materials for a Laugh, and so neglects all that should inform his Judgment and Reason, and make him a Man of Use and Reputation in this World. And as for the presence of making People facetious, and pestilently witty: I shall only desire that the nature of that kind of Wit may be considered, which will be found to depend upon some such Fooleries as these: As first

of all, the lucky ambiguity of some word or sentence. Oh! what a happiness is it, and how much does a Youngster count himself beholden to the Stars, that should help him to such a taking Jest? And whereas there be so many thousand words in the World, that he should luck upon the right one, that was so very much to his purpose, and that at the explosion made such a goodly report? Or else they rake *Lilly's* Grammar; and if they can but find two or three Letters of any Name in any of the Rules, or Examples of that good Man's Works, it is as very a piece of Wit, as any has pass'd in the Town since the King came in. Oh! how the *Fresh-men* will skip to hear one of those lines will laugh'd at, that they have been so often yerk'd for? It is true, such things as these go for Wit so long as they continue in *Latin*, but what dismally shrim'd things would they appear, if turn'd into *English*? And if we search into what

was

was of might be pretended, we shall find the advantages of *Latin*-Wit to be very small and slender, when it comes into the World. I mean not only amongst strict Philosophers, and Men of meer Notions, or amongst all-damming and illiterate *Hectors*; but amongst those that are truly ingenious, and judicious Masters of Phansie: We shall find, that a Quotation out of *Qui mihi*, an Axiom out of Logick, a Saying of a Philosopher, or the like, though manag'd with some quickness, & applied with some seeming ingenuity, whatever they did heretofore, will not in our dayes pass, or be accepted for Wit. For we must know, that as we now are in an Age of great Philosophers, and Men of Reason; so of great quickness and phansie: And that *Greek* and *Latin* which heretofore, though never so impertinently fetch'd in, was counted admirable, because it had a learned twang; yet now, such stuff being out of fashion, is esteemed but very bad

company. For the World is now, e-
specially in Discourse, for one Lan-
guage, and he that has somewhat in his
mind of *Greek* or *Latin*, is requisted
now-adays to be civil, and Translate
it into *English* for the benefite of the
Company. And he that has made it
his whole business, to accomplish
himself for the applause of a company
of Boys, School-Masters, and the easi-
est of Countrey Divines, and has been
shoulder'd out of the Cock-pit for
his Wit; when he comes into the
World, is the most likely person to
be kick'd out of the Company, for his
pedantry and over-weening opinion
of himself. And, were it necessary,
it is an easie matter to appeal to Wit
both Ancient and Modern, that be-
yond all controversie have been suf-
ciently approved of, that never, I am
confident, received their improve-
ments by imploying their Time in
Puns and Quibbles. There is the pro-
digious *Lucian*, the great *Don*
Mancha, and there is many now li-
in

ing Wits of our own, who never certainly were at all inspir'd from a *Tripus's*, *Terra filius's* or *Praevaricator's* Speech.

I have ventur'd, Sir, thus far, not to find fault with, but only to enquire into an ancient Custom or two of the Universities, wherein the Clergy seem to be a little concern'd, as to their Education there. I shall now look upon them as Beneficed, and consider their Preaching: Wherein I pretend to give no Rules, having neither any Gift at it, nor Authority to do it; but only shall make some conjectures at those useless and ridiculous Things, commonly uttered in Pulpits, that are generally disgusted, and are very apt to bring contempt upon the Preacher, and that Religion which he professes.

Amongst the first things that seem to be useless, may be reckon'd the high tossing and swaggering Preaching; either mountingly Eloquent, or profoundly Learned. For there be

a sort of Divines, who if they but happen of an unlucky hard word all the week, they think themselves not careful of their Flock, if they lay it not up till *Sunday* and bestow it amongst them in their next Preachment. Or, if they light upon some difficult and obscure Notion, which their curiosity inclines them to be better acquainted with, how useless soever, nothing so frequent as for them for a month or two months together, to tear and tumble this Doctrine; and the poor People once a week shall come and gaze upon them by the hour, until they preach themselves, as they think, into a right understanding.

Those that are inclinable to make these useless Speeches to the People, they do it, for the most part, upon one of these two considerations: Either out of simple phantastick Glory, and a great studiousness of being wonder'd at; as if getting into the Pulpit were a kind of Staging, where nothing was to be considered, but how much the

Sermon

Sermon takes, and how much ſtar'd at: Or elſe they do this to gain a reſpect, and reverence from their People, who, ſay they, are to be puzled now and then, and carried into the Clouds. For, if the Miniſters words be ſuch as the Conſtable uſes, his Matter plain and practical, ſuch as comes to the common Market, he may paſs poſſibly for an honeſt and well-meaning Man, but by no means for an Scholar: Whereas, if he ſpringe forth now and then in high raptures toward the uppermoſt Heavens, daſhing here and there an all-confounding Word; if he ſoars aloft in unintelligible huffs, Preaches Points deep and myſticall, and delivers them as dark and phantaſticall; this is the way, ſay they, of being accounted a moſt able and learned Inſtructor.

Others, there be, whoſe parts ſtand not ſo much towards tall Words and lofty Notions, but conſiſt in ſcattering up and down, and beſprinkling all their Sermons with plenty of *Greek*

and *Latin*. And because St. *Paul*, once or so, was pleased to make use of a little Heathen *Greek*; and that only, when he had occasion to discourse with some of the learned ones, that well understood him, therefore must they needs bring in twenty Poets and Philosophers (if they can catch them) into an hours talk: Spreading themselves in abundance of *Greek* and *Latin*, to a company perhaps of Farmers and Shepherds. Neither will they rest there, but have at the *Hebrew* also; not contenting themselves to tell the People in generall, that they have skill in the Text, and that the Exposition they offer agrees with the Originall, but must swagger also over the poor Parishioners with the dreadfull *Hebrew* it self, with their *Ben-Israel's*, *Ben-Manasses's*, and many more *Ben's* that they are intimately acquainted with; whereas there is nothing in the Church, nor near it by a Mile, that understands them, but God Almighty himself, whom it is

supposed

suppoſed, they go not about to inform or ſatisfie.

This learned way of talking, though for the moſt part it is done meerly out of oſtentation, yet ſometimes (which makes not the caſe much better) it is done in complement and civility to the all-wile *Patron*, or all-underſtanding *Juſtice of the peace* in the Pariſh: Who by the common Farmers of the Town, muſt be thought to underſtand the moſt intricate Notions, and the moſt difficult Languages. Now, what an admirable thing this is? Suppoſe there ſhould be one or ſo in the whole Church that underſtands ſomewhat beſides *Engliſh*; Shall not I think that he underſtands that better? Muſt I out of Courtſhip to his Worſhip and underſtanding, and becauſe perhaps I am to dine with him, prate abundance of ſuch ſtuff, which I muſt needs know no body underſtands, or that will be the better for it, but himſelf, and perhaps ſcarce he? This I ſay, becauſe I certainly know ſeveral of that diſpo-

on, who, if they chance to have a Man of any Learning or Understanding, more than the rest in the Parish, Preach wholly at him, and level most of their Discourses at his supposed capacity; and the rest of the good People shall have only a handsome gaze or view of the Person. As if plain words, usefull and intelligible instructions, were not as good for an Esquire, or one that is in Comission from the King, as for him that holds the Plough or mends Hedges.

Certainly he that considers the design of his Office, and has a Conscience answerable to that Holy Undertaking, must needs conceive himself ingaged, not only to mind this or that accomplish'd or well dress'd Person, but must have an universal care and regard of all his Parish. And as he must think himself bound not only to visit Down-beds, and Silken Courtains, but also Flocks and Straw, if there be need: So ought his care to be as large to instruct the poor, the weak and dispi-

cable

cable part of his Parish, as those that sit in the best Pews. He that does otherwise, thinks not at all of a Man's Soul, but only accommodates himself to fine Cloaths, an abundance of Ribbons, and the highest Seat in the Church: Not thinking, that it will be as much to his reward in the next World, by sober advice, care, and instruction, to have saved one that takes Collection, as him that is able to relieve half the Town. It is very plain, that neither our *Saviour*, when he was upon Earth and taught the World, made any such distinction in his Discourses: What more intelligible to all Man-kind, than his Sermon upon the Mount? neither did the *Apostles* think of any such way: I wonder whom they take for a Pattern? I will suppose once again, that the design of these Persons is to gain Glory: And I shall ask them; Can there be any greater in the World than doing generall good? To omit future reward: Was it not always esteemed

esteemed of old, That correcting evil practices, reducing People that lived amiss, was much better, than making a high Rant about a Shittle-cock, and making *Tara tantara* about a Feather? Or if they would be only admired, then would I gladly have them consider, What a thin and delicate kind of admiration is likely to be produced, by that which is not at all understood? Certainly that Man that has a design of building up to himself real Fame in good earnest by things well said and spoken, his way to effect it, is not by talking strangely, and casting a Mist before the Peoples Eyes, but by offering such things by which he may be esteemed with knowledge and understanding.

Thus far concerning hard Words, high Notions, and unprofitable Quotations out of learned Languages. I shall now consider such things as are ridiculous, that serve for Chimney and Market-talk, after the Sermon be done; and that do cause more

more immediatly the Preacher to be ſcorn'd and undervalued. I have no reaſon, Sir, to go about to determine what ſtile or method is beſt for the improvement and advantage of all People: For, I queſtion not, but there has been as many ſeveral ſorts of Preachers as Orators; and though very different, yet uſeful and commendable in their kind. *Tully* takes very deſervedly with many, *Seneca* with others, and *Cato*, no queſtion, ſaid things wiſely and well: So doubtleſs the ſame place of Scripture may by ſeveral be variouſly conſidered; and although their method and ſtile be altogether different, yet they may all ſpeak things very convenient for the People to know, and be adviſ'd of. But yet certainly what is moſt undoubtedly uſeleſſe, and empty; or what is judg'd abſolutely ridiculous, not by this or that curious or ſqueamiſh Auditor, but by every man in the *Corporation* that underſtands but plain *Engliſh* and common ſenſe,

ought

ought to be avoided. For all people are naturally born with such a judgment of true and allowable *Rhetorick*, that is, of what is decorous and convenient to be spoken, that whatever is grosly otherwise, is usually ungrateful, not only to the wise and skilful part of the Congregation; but shall seem also ridiculous to the very unlearned Tradesmen, and their young Apprentices. Amongst which, may be chiefly reckoned these following; harsh Metaphors, childish Similitudes, and ill applied Tales.

The first main thing, I say, that makes many Sermons so ridiculous, and the Preachers of them so much disparag'd and undervalued, is an inconsiderate use of frightful Metaphors; which making such a remarkable impression upon the Ears, and leaving such a jarring twang behind them, are oft-times remembred to the discredit of the Minister, as long as he continues in the Parish. I have heard the very Children in the Streets,

Streets, and the little Boyes close about the Fire, refresh themselves strangely, but with the repetition of a few of such far-fetch'd and odd-sounding Expressions: *Tully* therefore and *Cæsar*, the two greatest Masters of *Roman* Eloquence, were very wary and sparing of that sort of Rhetorick: We may read many a Page in their Works, before we meet with any of those Bears; and if you do light upon one or so, it shall not make your hair stand right up, or put you into a fit of a Convulsion; but it shall be so soft, significant, and familiar, as if 'twere made for the very purpose. But as for the common sort of People that are addicted to this way of expression in their Discourses; away presently to both the *Indies*, rake Heaven and Earth, down to the bottom of the Sea, then tumble over all Arts and Sciences, ransack all Shops and Ware-houses, spare neither Camp nor City, but that they will have them. So fond are

such

such deceived ones of these same gay words, that they count all Discourses empty, dull, and cloudy, unless bespangled with these Glitterings. Nay, so injudicious, and impudent together, will they sometimes be, that the *Almighty* himself is often in danger of being dishonoured by these indiscreet and horrid Metaphor-mongers: And when they thus blaspheme the God of Heaven, by such unhallowed Expressions, to make amends, they'l put you in, an *As it were*, forsooth, or, *As I may so say*; that is, they will make bold to speak what they please concerning God himself, rather than omit what they judge, though never so false, to be witty: And then they come in hobling with their lame submission, and with their *Reverence be it spoken*. As if it were not much better to leave out what they foresee is likely to be interpreted for Blasphemy, or at least great Extravagancy, than to utter that, for which their own Reason and Conscience

science tells them, they are bound to lay in before-hand an excuse.

To which may be further subjoyn'd, That Metaphors, though very apt and allowable, are intelligible but to some sorts of Men, of this or that kind of Life, of this or that Profession: For example; Perhaps one Gentlemans Metaphorical knack of Preaching comes of the Sea; and then we shal hear of nothing but *Star-board & Larboard*, of *Stemm*, *Stern*, and *Fore-castles*, and such like Salt-water Language; so that one had need take a Voyage to *Smyrna* or *Aleppo*, and very warily attend to all the Saylors terms, before I shall in the least understand my Teacher. Now, although such a Sermon may possibly do some good in a *Coast-Town*, yet upward into the Countrey in an Inland-Parish, it will do no more than *Syriack* or *Arabick*. Another he falls a fighting with his Text, and makes a pitch'd Battel of it, dividing it into the *Right-wing* and *Left-wing*, then

he *rears* it, *flanks* it, *entrenches* it, *forms* it; and then he muſters all again, to ſee what word was loſt, or lam'd in the Skirmiſh, and ſo falling on ag in with freſh Valour, he fights backward and forward, Charges through and through; Routs; Kills; Takes; and then, *Gentlemen as you were.* Now to ſuch of his Pariſh as have been in the late Warrs, this is not very formidable; for they do but ſuppoſe themſelves at *Edge-hill* or *Naſeby*, and they are not much ſcar'd at his Doctrine: But as for others, who have not had ſuch figliting opportunities, it is very lamentable to conſider, how ſhivering they ſit without underſtanding, till the Battel be over. Like inſtance might be eaſily given of many more Diſcourſes; the Metaphorical phraſing whereof, depending upon peculiar Arts, Cuſtoms, Trades, and Profeſſions, makes them uſeful and intelligible only to ſuch who have been very well buſied in ſuch like employments.

Ano-

Another thing, Sir, that brings great dis-respect and mischief upon the Clergy, and that differs not much from what went immediately before, is their packing their Sermons so full of *Similitudes*; which, all the World know, carry with them but very small force of Argument, unless there be an exact Agreement with that which is compared; of which there is very seldom any sufficient care taken. Besides, those that are addicted to this slender way of discourse, for the most part do so weaken and enfeeble their judgment, by contenting themselves to understand by colours, features, and glimpses, that they perfectly omit all the more profitable searching into the nature and causes of things themselves. By which means it necessarily comes to pass, that what they undertake to prove, and clear out to the Congregation, must needs be so faintly done, and with such little force of Argument, that the conviction

ction or perswasion will last no longer in the Parishioners mindes, than the warmth of those Similitudes shall glow in their Phansie. So that he that has either been instructed in some part of his Duty, or excited to the performance of the same, not by any judicious dependance of things, and lasting reason, but by such faint and toyish evidence; his understanding upon all occasions will be as apt to be misled as ever, and his affections as troublesome and ungovernable.

But they are not so unserviceable, as usually they are ridiculous; for People of the weakest parts are most commonly overborn with these fooleries: which, together with the great difficulty of their being prudently mannag'd, must needs occasion them, for the most part, to be very trifling and childish. Especially, if we consider the choiceness of the Authors, out of which they are furnished: There is the never-to-be-commended enough *Licosthenes*; there

is

is also the admirable Piece, called *the second part of Wits Commonwealth* (I pray mind it, it is the second Part, not the First): and there is besides, a Book wholly consisting of Similitudes, applyed and ready fitted to most Preaching Subjects, for the help of Young-Beginners, who sometimes will not make them hit handsomly. 'Tis very well known, that such as are possess'd with an admiration or such Eloquence, think that they are very much encourag'd in their way, by the Scripture it self: For, say they, did not our blessed *Saviour* himself use many Metaphors, and many Parables? And did not his Disciples, following his so excellent an Example, do the like? And is not this, not only Warrant enough, but near upon a Command to us so for to do? If you please therefore we will see what our Soviour does in this Case. In St. *Matthew* he tells his Disciples, that they *are the Salt of the Earth; that they are the Light*

of

of the World; that they are a City set on a Hill: Furthermore, he tells his Apostles, that *he sends them forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves*; and bids them therefore, *be as wise as Serpents, and harmlesse as Doves.* Now, are not all these things plain and familiar, even almost to Children themselves, that can but taste and see; and to Men of the lowest Education, and meanest Capacities?

I shall not here insist upon those special and admirbale Reasons, for which our Saviour made use of so many Parables: Only thus much is needfull to be said, namely, that they are very much mistaken, that from hence think themselves tollerated to turn all the World into frivolous and abominable Similitudes. As for our Saviour, when he spoke a Parable, he was pleased to go no further than the Fields, the Sea-shoar, a Garden, a Vineyard, or the like; which are things, without the knowledge whereof, scarce any Man can be supposed

posed to live in this World. But as for our Metaphorical and Similitude-Men of the Pulpit, these things to them are too still and languid, they do not rattle and rumble: These lie too near home, and within vulgar kenn: There is little on this side the Moon that will content them: Up presently to the *Primum-Mobile*, and the trepidation of the Firmament: Dive into the Bowels and hid Treasures of the Earth: Dispatch forthwith for *Pirn Jamaica*; a Town-bred or Countrey-bred Similitude, it is worth nothing? *'Tis reported of a Tree growing upon the bank of* Euphrates, *the great River* Euphrates, *that it brings forth an Apple, to the Eye very fair and tempting, but inwardly it is fill'd with nothing but useless and deceitfull dust: Even so, dust we are, and to dust we must go.* Now, what a lucky discovery was this that a Man's Body should be so exactly like an Apple? And I will assure you, that this was not though on till within

these

these few years. And I am afraid too, he had a kind of a hint of his from another who had formerly found out, that a Man's Soul was like an Oyster; For, sayes he, in his Prayer, *Our Souls are constantly gaping after thee, O Lord; yea verily, our Souls do gape, even as an Oyster gapeth.* It seems pretty hard, at first sight, to bring into a Sermon all the Circles of the Globe, and all the frightful terms of *Astronomy*. But I'll assure you, Sir, it is to be done, because it has been. But not by every Bungler and ordinary Text-divider, but by a Man of great Cunning and Experience: There is a place in the Prophet *Malachi*, where it will do very neatly, and that is, chap. 4. v. 2. *But unto you that fear my Name, shall the Sun of Righteousnesse arise with healing in his Wings*: From which words, in the first place, it plainly appears, that our *Saviour* passed through all the twelve Signs of the *Zodiack*. And more than that too, all proved by very apt and familiar

familiar places of Scripture. First then, our *Saviour* was in *Aries*; or else what means that of the Psalmist? *The Mountains skipped like Rams and the little hills like Lambs.* And again, that in the *second* of the *Kings*, *ch.* 3. *ver.* 4. *And* Mesha *King of* Moab *was a Sheep-Master, and rendered unto the King of* Israel *an hundred thousand Lambs*: and what follows? *and an hundred thousand Rams with the wool. Mind it; it was the King of Israel.* In like manner was he in *Taurus*, *Psal.* 22. 12. *Many Bulls have compassed me: Strong Bulls of Bashan have beset me round.* They were not ordinary Bulls: They were *compasing Bulls*, They were *besitting Bulls*, they were *strong* Bashan *Bulls*. What need I speak of *Gemini*? Surely you cannot but remember *Jacob* & *Esau*, *Gen.* 25. 24 *And When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold there were Twins in her Womb*, Or of *Cancer*? when as the *Psalmist* sayes so plainly: *What ailed thee, O thou Sea, that thou fleddest? thou* Jordan, *that thou*

 wast

mast driven back? Nothing more plain. It were as easie to shew the like in all the rest of the Signs: But instead of that, I shall rather chuse to make this one practical Observation: That the Mercy of God to Mankind in sending his Son into the World, it was a very *signal* Mercy: it was a *Zodiacal* Mercy. I say it was truly *Zodiacal*: For *Christ* keeps within the *Tropicks*: He goes not out of the *Path* of the Church. But yet he is not always at the same distance from a Believer: Sometimes he withdraws himself into the *Apogeum of doubt, sorrow, and dispair; but then he comes again into the Perigeum of joy, content, and assurance*: *But as for Heathens and Unbelievers, they are all Artick and Antartick Reprobates.* Now when such stuff as this, as sometimes 'tis, is vented in a poor Parish, where People can scarce tell what day of the month it is by the *Almanack*, how seasonable and savoury it is likely to be? It seems also not very

easie

ercise, for a man in his Sermon to learn his Parishoners how to dessolve Gold: of what, and how the stuff is made. Now, to ring the Bells, and call the People on purpose together, would be but a blunt business; but to do it neatly, and when no Body look'd for it, that's the rarity and art of it. Suppose then, that he takes for his Text that of St. *Matthew*, *Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand*. Now tell me, Sir, do you not perceive the Gold to be in a dismal fear, to curl and quiver at the first reading of these words. It must come in thus: *The blotts and blurrs of our Sins must be taken out by the* Aqua-fortis *of our Tears; to which* Aqua-fortis *if you put a fifth part of* Sal-Almoniack, *and set them in a gentle heat, it makes* Aqua-Regia, *which dissolves Gold*. And now 'tis out wonderful are the things that are to be done by the help of Metaphors and Similitudes! And I'll undertake, that with a little more pains and consideration, out of the

very same words, he could have taught the People how to make Custards, Marmalade, or to stew Prunes. But pray, why the *Aqua-fortis* of Tears? For, if it so falls out, that there should chance to be neither *Apothecary* nor *Druggist* at Church, there's an excellent Jest wholly lost. Now had he been so considerate, as to have laid his Wit in some more common and intelligible Material: For Example, had he said that the *blots of* Sin, will be easily taken out *by the Soap of Sorrow, and the Fullers-Earth of Contrition*; Then possibly the Person and the People might all have admired one another. For there be many a good-Wife that understands very well all the intrigues of Pepper, Salt, and Vinegar, who knows not any thing of the all-pourfulness of *Aqua-fortis*, how that it is such a Spot-removing Liquor. I cannot but consider with what understanding the people sighed and cryed, when the Minister made for them this Metaphysical Confession

on

on: *Omnipotent All, Thou art only: Because thou art All, and because thou only art: As for us, we are not, but we seem to be; and only seem to be, because we are not; for we be but Mites of entity, and Crumbs of something*; and so on: As if a company of Country People were bound to understand *Suarez*, and all the *School Divines*.

And as some are very high and learned in their attempts; so others there be who are of somewhat too mean and dirty imaginations: Such was he, who goes by the name of *Parson Slipstocking*: Who preaching about the Grace and Assistance of God, and that of our selves we are able to do nothing; advised his beloved to take him in this Plain Similitude. *A Father calls his Child to him, saying, Child, pull off this Stocking: The Child mightily joyful that it should pull off Father's stocking, takes hold of the Stocking, and tuggs, and pulls, and sweats but to no purpose: for Stocking sticks not, for it is but a Child that*

pulls: Then the Father bids the Child to rest a little, and try again; so then the Child sets on again, ruggs again, and pulls again, and sweats again, but no Stocking comes; for Child is but Child: Then at last the Father, taking pitty upon his Child, puts his hand behind and slips down the Stocking, and off comes the Stocking: Then how does the Child rejoyce? for Child have pull'd off Father's Stocking. Alas, poor Child! It was not Child's strength, it was not Child's sweating that got off the Stocking, but yet it was the Father's hand behind that slipt down the Stocking. Even so——— Not much unlike to this was he, that preaching about the Sacrament and Faith, makes Christ a *Shop-kipper*; telling you, that *Christ is a Treasury of all Wares and Commodities*: And thereupon, opening his wide throat, cryes aloud, *Good People, what do ye lack? what do you buy? will you buy any Balm of Gilead, any Eye-salve, any Myrrhe, Aloes, or Cassia?*

shall

shall I fit you with a Rob of Righteousness, or with a white Garment? See here! what is it you want? Here's a very choice Armory: shall I shew you an Helmet of Salvation, a Shield or a Breast-plate of Faith? Or will you please to walk in, and see some precious Stones? a Jasper, a Saphire, or a Chalcedonit? Speak, what do you buy? Now for my part, I must needs say, and I much phansie I speak the mind of thousands, that it had been much better for such an imprudent and ridiculous Bawler as this, to have been condemn'd to have cryed Oysters or Brooms, than to discredite, after this unsanctified Rate, his Profession, and our Religion.

It would be an endless thing, Sir, to count up to you all the Follies, for an hundred years last past, that have been Preached and Printed of this kind. But yet I cannot omit that of the famous *Divine*, in his time, who advising the People in days of danger to run unto the Lord, tells them, that

they cannot go to the Lord, much leſſe run without feet: There be therefore two feet to run to the Lord, Faith and Prayer: 'Tis *plain that Faith is a foot*, For by Faith we ſtand, 2 Cor. 1. 24. *therefore by Faith we muſt run to the Lord who is faithful. The ſecond is Prayer, a ſpiritual Leg to bear us thither: Now, that Prayer is a ſpiritual Leg, appears from ſeveral Places of Scripture; as from that of* Jonah, *ſpeaking of coming*, chap. 2. verſ. 7. And my Prayer came unto thine holy Temple: *And likewiſe from that of the Apoſtle, who ſayes*, Heb. 4. 16. Let us therefore go unto the Throne of Grace; *Both intimating that Prayer is the ſpiritual Leg, there being no coming or going to the Lord without the Leg of Prayer.* He further adds: *Now, that theſe feet may be able to bear us thither, we muſt put on the Hoſe of Faith; for the Apoſtle ſayes, our feet muſt be ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of Peace.* The truth of it is, the *Author*

is

is somewhat obscure: For at first, Faith was a *Foot*; and by and by it is an *Hose*; and at last it proves a *Shoo*: If he had pleased, he could have made it any thing.

Neither can I let passe that of a later Author; who telling us, *It is Goodnesse by which we must ascend to Heaven*; and that *Goodnesse is the Milkey-way to* Jupiter's *Palace*; could not rest here, but must tell us further, that *to strengthen us in our journey, we must not take morning Milk, but some morning Meditations*; fearing, I suppose, lest some people should mistake; and think to go to Heaven by eating now and then a Mess of *Morning Milk*, because the way was *milkey*.

Neither ought that to be omitted, not long since printed, upon those words of St. *John*, *These things I write unto you, that you sin not.* The Observation is, That it is the purpose of the Scripture to drive Men from Sin. *These Scriptures contain*

Doctrins, Precepts, Promises, Threatnings and Histories; Now, says he, *take these five smooth stones, and put them into the scrip of the Heart, and throw them with the Sling of Faith, by the Hand of a strong Resolution, against the forehead of Sin, and we shall see it, like* Goliah, *fall before us.*

But I shal not trouble you any further upon this subject; but, if ye have a mind to here any more of this stuff, I shall refer you to the learned and judicious Author of the *Friendly debates*; who particularly has at large discoverd the intollerable fooleries of this way of talking. I shall only add this much; that such as go about to fetch blood into their pale and lean discourses, by the help of their brisk and sparkling Similitudes, ought well to consider, whether their Similitudes be true. I am confident, Sir, you have heard it many and many a time (or, if need be, I can shew you't in a Book) that when the Preacher happens to talk, how that the things here below will not satisfie the Mind

of Man; then comes in the *round World, which cannot fil the triangular Heart of Man*: Whereas every Butcher knows, that the Heart is no more triangular, than an ordinary Pear, or a Child's Top. But because *Triangular* is a hard word, and perhaps a Jest, therefore people have stollen it one from another, these two or three hundred years; And, for ought I know, much longer; for I cannot direct to the first Inventer of the phansie.

In like manner they are to consider, what things either in the Heavens, or belonging to the Earth, have been found out by experience to contradict what has been formerly allow'd of. Thus, because some ancient *Astronomers* had observ'd that both the distances as well as the Revolutions of the Planets, were in some proportion or harmony one to another; therefore people that abounded more with imagination than skill, presently phansi'd the *Moon*, *Mercury*, and *Venus* to be a kind of

Vio-

Violins Trebles to *Jupiter* & *Saturn*; and that the *Sun* & *Mars* supply'd the room of Tenors; the *Primum Mobile* running Diviſion all the time. So that one could ſcarce hear a Sermon, but they muſt give you a touch of the *Harmony of the Spheres*. Thus, Sir, you ſhall have 'm take that of St. *Paul*, about *faith, hope, and charity*: and inſtead of a ſober inſtructing the people in thoſe eminent & excellent Graces, they ſhal only ring you over a few changes upon the three words: crying, *Faith, Hope*, and *Charity*: *Hope, Faith*, and *Charity*, and ſo on: And when they have done their Peal, they ſhall tell you, that *this is much better than the Harmony of the Spheres*.

At other times I have heard a long Chyming only between two words; as ſuppoſe *Divinity* and *Philoſophy*, or *Revelation* & *Reaſon*: ſetting forth with *Revelation* firſt: *Revelation is a Lady: Reaſon an handmaid. Revelation's thy Eſquire: Reaſon thy Page. Revelation's the Sun: Reaſon but the Moon. Revelation is Manna: Reaſon's*

but an Acorn. Revelation a wedge of Gold. Reason a small piece of Silver. Thenby and by Reason gets it & leads it away. *Reason indeed is very good; but Revelation is much better. Reason is a Counseller; but Revelation is the Law-giver. Reason is a Candle; but Revelation is the Snuffer.* Certainly those people are possess'd with a very great degree of dulness, who, living under the meanes of such of enlightning Preaching, should not be mightily settled in the right Notion, and true bounds of Faith and Reason.

Not less ably, me-thought, was the difference between the Old Covenant and New, lately determined. *The Old Covenant was of Works; the New Covenant of Faith. The Old Covenant was by* Moses; *the new by* Christ. *The Old was heretofore; the New afterwards. The Old was first; the New was second. Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.* And so the business was very fundamentally done.

I shall say no more upon this subject, but this one thing, which relates to what was said a little before: he that has got a set of Similitudes, calculated according to the old Philosophy, and *Ptolomy's* Systeme of the world, must burn his common-place-Book, and go a-gleaning for new ones: It being now a dayes much more gentle and warrantable, to take a Similitude from the *Man* in the *Moon*, than from *solid Orbs*: For though few people do absolutely believe, that there is any such *Eminent Person* there, yet the thing is possible, whereas the other is not.

I have now done, Sir, with that imprudent way of speaking, by Metaphor and Similitude. There be many other things commonly spoken out of the Pulpit, that are much to the disadvantage, and discredit of the Clergy, that ought also to be briefly hinted. And that I may the better light upon them, I shall observe their common method of preaching.

Be-

Before the Text is to be divided, a *Preface* is to be made: And it is a great chance, if, first of all, the Minister does not make his Text to be like something or other. For Example: One he tells you, *And now (methinks) my Text, like an ingenious Picture, looks upon all here present; in which both Nobles and People may behold their sin and danger represented.* This was a Text out of *Hosea*. Now, had it been out of any other place of the Bible, the Gentlemen was sufficiently resolv'd, to make it like an ingenious Picture. Another taking (perhaps) the very same words, sayes, *I might compare my Text to the Mountains of Bether, where the Lord disports himself, as a young Hart, or a pleasant Roe among the Spices.* Another Man's Text is *like the Rod of Moses, to divide the Waves of Sorrow*; or, *like the Mantle of Elijah, to restrain the swelling floods of Grief.* Another gets to his Text thus: *As Solomon went up six steps*

to come to the great Throne of Ivory; so must I ascend six degrees to come to the high top-meaning of my Text. Another thus: *As* Deborah *arose, and went with* Barack *to Kadish; so, if you will go along with him, and call in at the third Verse of the Chapter, he will shew you the meaning of his Text.*

Another he fancies his Text to be extraordinarily like to an *Orchard of Pomegranates*; or like St. Matthew, *sitting at the Receit of Custom*; *or like the Dove that* Noah *sent out of his Ark.* I believe there are above forty places of Scripture that have been like *Rachel & Leah*: And there is one in *Genesis*, as I well remember, that is *like a pair of Compasses straddling*: And, if I be not much mistaken, there is one somewhere else, that is *like a man going to* Jericho.

Now, Sir, having thus made the way to the Text, as smooth and plain as any thing; with a *Preface* perhaps from *Adam*; though his business lie

at

at the other end of the *Bible*: In the next place, he comes to *Divide* the Text.

——— *Hic Labor, hoc Opus.*
Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum. —— *Silvestrem tenui* ——

Now come off the Gloves, and the Hands, being well chafed, he shrinks up his shoulders, and stretches forth himself as if he were going to cleave a Bullock's head, or rive the Body of an Oak. But we must observe that there is a great difference of Texts. For all Texts come not asunder alike: For sometimes the words *naturally fall* asunder; sometimes they *drop* asunder; sometimes they *melt*; sometimes they *untwist*; and there be some words so willing to be parted, that they *divide themselves* to the great ease and rejoycing of the Minister. But if they will not easily come in pieces; then he falls to hacking and hewing, as if he would make all fly into shivers. The truth of it is,

I have

I have known, now, and then, some knotty Texts, that have been divided seven or eight times over, before they could make them split handsomly, according to their mind.

But then comes the Joy of Joyes, when the parts *jingle*, or begin with the *same letter*, and especially if in Latin. O how it tickled the *divider*, when he had got his Text into those two excellent Branches; *Accusatio Vera: Comminatio Severa. A Charge full of verity; A Discharge full of severity.* And I'll warrant you that did not please a little, viz. There is in the words *duplex miraculum*; *Miraculum in modo*, and *miraculum in modo*. But the luckyest that I have met withall, both for wit and keeping the letter, is upon those words of St. *Matth.* 12. 43, 44, 45. *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none. Then he saith, I will return, &c.* In which words 2 these strange things were found out.

First,

First, there was a *Caprain* and a *Caſtle*. Do ye ſee, Sir, the ſame letter? Then there was an *ingreſs*, an *agreſs*, and a *regreſs*, or *re-ingreſs*. Then there was *unreſting* and *unreſting*. Then there was *number* and *name*, *manner* and *meaſure*, *trouble* and *tryall*, *reſolution* and *revolution*, *aſſemblies* and *aſſaſſinations*, *weidneſs*, and *vacuity*. This was done at the ſame time, by the ſame Man: But, to confeſſe the truth of it, 'twas a good long Text, and ſo he had the greater advantage.

But for a ſhort Text, that certainly was the greateſt *break* that ever was; which was occaſioned from thoſe words of St. *Luke* 23. 28. *Weep not for me, weep for your ſelves*: or, as ſome read it, *but weep for your ſelves*. It is a plain caſe, Sir, here's but eight words, and the buſineſs was ſo cunningly ordered, that there ſprung out eight parts: *Here are*, ſayes the Doctor, *eight words, and eight parts*. 1. *Weep not*. 2. *But weep*.

3. *Weep*

3. *Weep not but weep.* 4. *Weep for me.* 5. *For your ſelves.* 6. *For me for your ſelves.* 7. *Weep not for me* 8. *But weep for your ſelves.* That is to ſay: *North, North and by Eaſt: North North Eaſt, North Eaſt and by North, North Eaſt, and by Eaſt, Eaſt North Eaſt, Eaſt and by North, Eaſt* —— Now it ſeems not very eaſie to determine, which has oblidged the World moſt, he that found out the *Compaſs*, or he that divided the fore-mentioned Text: But I ſuppoſe the cracks will go generally upon the *Doctor's* ſide; by reaſon what he did, was done by undoubted Art, and abſolute Induſtry; but as for the other, the common report is, that it was found out by meer fooliſh fortune. Well: Let it go how it will, queſtionleſs, they will be both famous in their way, and honourably mentioned to Poſterity.

Neither ought he to be altogether ſlighted, who taking that of *Gen.* 48. 2. for his Text, *viz. And one told*

told Jacob, *and said, Behold, thy Son* Joseph *cometh unto thee*; presently perceived, and made it out to the People. That *his Text was a Spiritual Dial. For*, saies he, *here be in my Text twelve words, which do plainly represent the twelve hours. Twelve words. And one told* Jacob, *and said, Thy Son* Joseph *cometh unto thee. And here is besides*, Behold; *which is the Hand of the Dial, that turns and points at every word in the Text. And one told* Jacob, *& said*, Behold, *thy Son* Joseph *cometh unto thee. For it is not said*, Behold *Jacob*, or Behold, *Joseph: But it is, And one told* Jacob, *and said*, Behold, *thy Son* Joseph *cometh unto thee. That is to say*: Behold *And*. Behold *one*. Behold *told*. Behold Jacob. *Again*: Behold *and*. Behold *said*. (*And also*:) Behold, *behold*, &c. *Which is the reason that this word* Behold, *is placed in the middle of the other twelve words, indifferently pointing at each word.*

Now,

Now, as it needs must be One of the Clock, before it can be Two or Three; so I shall handle this word, And, the first word in the Text, before I meddle with the following. And *one told Jacob: This word* And, *is but a Particle, and a small one! But small things are not to be despised.* St. Mat. 18. 10. Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones. *For this* And *is as the Tacks and Loops amongst the Curtains of the Tabernacle. The Tacks put into the Loops did couple the Curtains of the Tent, and sew the Tent together: So this Particle* And *being put into the Loops of the words immediately before the Text, does couple the Text to the foregoing Verse, and sewes them close together.*

I shall not trouble you, Sir, with the rest; being much after this witty rate, and to as much purpose. But we'll go one if you please, Sir, to the cunning *Observations, Doctrines,* and *Inferences,* that are commonly made and rais'd

rais'd from places of Scripture.

One he takes that for his Text, *Psal.* 68. 3. *But let the righteous be glad.* From whence he raiseth this Doctrine, That *there is a Spirit of Singularitie in the Saints of God. But let the Righteous.* A Doctrine, I'll warrant him, of his own raising; it being not very easie for any body to prevent him.

Another, he takes that of *Isa.* 41. 14, 15. *Fear not, thou worm* Jacob &c. *thou shalt thresh the Mountains* — Whence he observes, That the Worm *Jacob* was a threshing Worm.

Another, that of *Gen.* 44. 1. *And he commanded the Steward of his House, saying, Fill the Mens sacks with food as much as they can carry.* And makes his Note from the words; That *great Sacks, and many Sacks, will hold more than few Sacks, and little ones. For look,* saves he, *how they came prepared with Sacks and Beasts, so they were sent back with Corn: The greater and the more sacks they had*

pre-

prepared, the more Corn they carried away; if they prepared but small sacks, and a few, they had carried away the less: Verily and indeed extraordinarily true.

Another he falls upon that of *Isa.* 58 5. *Is it such a Fast that I have chosen? A day for a Man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a Bulrush?* The observation is, That *Repentance for an hour, or a day, is not worth A Bulrush.* And there, I think, he hit the business.

But of these, Sir, I can shew you a whole Book full, in a Treatise called *Flames* and *Discoveries*: Consisting of very notable and extraordinary things, which the inquisitive *Author* had privatly observed, and discovered, upon reading the *Evangelists*. As for example: Upon reading that of St. *John c.* 2. *v.* 15. *And when he had made a scourge of small Cords, he drove them all out of the Temple*: This praying *Divine* makes these *Discoveries*. *I discover*, sayes he, *in*

the

the first place, that in the Church or Temple, a scourge may be made. And when he had made a scourge. Secondly, that it may be made use on: He drove them all out of the Temple. And it was a great chance, that he had not discovered a third thing, and that is, that *the scourge was made before it was made use of.* Upon *Mat.* 4. 25. *And there followed him great multitudes of People from* Galilee: *I discover,* sayes he, *when* Jesus *prevails with us, we shall soon leave our* Galilees. *I discover also,* sayes he, *a great Miracle,* viz. *that the way after* Jesus *being straight, that such a multitude should follow him,* Matth. 5. 1. *And seeing the Multitude, he went up into a Mountain;* Upon this he discovers severall very remarkable things: First, he discovers, *that* Christ *went from the Multitude.* Secondly, *that it is safe taking warning at our eyes; for seeing the Multitude he went up.* Thirdly, *It is not fit to be always upon the plains and flats with the*

Multitude; but if we be risin with Christ, *to seek those things that are above*. He discovers also very strang things from the latter part of the fore-mentioned Verse: *And when he was set, his Disciples came unto him.* 1. Christ *is not alwayes in motion: And when he was set.* 2. *He walks not on the Mountain, but sits: And when he was set.* From whence also, in the third place, he advises People, That *When they are Teaching, they should not move too much, for that is to be carried too and fro with every wind of Doctrine*: Now certaintly never was this place of Scripture more seasonably brought in. Now, Sir, if you be for a very short and witty Discovery, let it be upon that of St. *Mat.* 6. 27. *Which of you by taking thought, can add one Cubit unto his stature?* The Discovery is this: *That whilest the Disciples were taking thought for a Cubit*, Christ *takes them down a Cubit lower.* Notable also are two Discoveries made upon St. *Mat.* 8. 1.

When

when he came down from the Mountain, great Multitudes followed him. 1. *That* Christ *came down as well as went up; When he came down from the Mountain* 2. *That the Multitude did not go hail follow well met with him, nor before him: For, great Multitudes followed him.* I love with all my heart, when People can prove what they say: For there be many that will talk of their Discoveries and spirituall Observations; and when all comes to all, they are nothing but pittifull ghesses, and slender conjectures. In like manner that was no contemptible Discoverie that was made upon St. *Mat.* 8. 19. *And a certain Scribe came and said, Master, I will follow thee whereſoever thou goeſt.* And thou *ſhalt be followed more than a* that: *I will follow thee whereſoever thou goeſt.* And, in my opinion, that was not altogether amiſs upon St. *Mat.* 11. 2. *Now when* John *had heard in the Priſon the Works of* Chriſt, *he ſent two of his*

Disciples. The Discovery is this That *it is not good sending single* Christ: *He sent two of his Disciples* Some also possibly may not distil that upon St *Luke.* 12. 35. *Let your Loyns be girded. I discover,* saies he, *there must be a holy girding and tra sing up for Heaven.* But I shall en all with that very politick one, that b makes upon St. *Mat.* 12. 47. *The one said unto him, Behold thy Mo ther and thy Brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he an swered and said, Who is my Mother and who are my Brethren? I discov now,* saies he, *that* Jesus *is upo busines.* Doubtless, this was one of the greatest Discoverers of hidden Mysteries, and one of the most Pry ers into Spirituall Secrets, that ever the World was owner of. It was very well that he happn'd upon a Godly Calling, and no secular Employment; or else in good truth, down had they all gone, *Turke, Pope,* and *Emperour;* for he would have discovered them,

one

ne way or other, every Man.

Not much unlike to these wonder-ll Discoverers are they, who chu-ng to Preach upon some *Points in Divinity*, shall purposely avoid all ch plain Texts, as might give them ery just occasion to discourse upon eir intended Subject, and shall itch upon some other places of Scrip-ure, which no Creature in the world ut themselves did ever imagine that hich they offer to be therein design-d. My meaning, Sir, is this: Sup-pose you have a mind to make a Ser-on concerning *Episcopacy*, (as in he late Times there was several oc-asions for it) you must by no means ake any place of Scripture that proves r favours that kind of *Ecclesiastical Government*: For when the Plot will e discovered, and the People will say o themselves, we know where o find you, you intend to Preach a-out *Episcopacy*. But you must take ha: of the *Acts*, *c.* 16. *v.* 30. *Sirs, What must I do to be saved?* An ab-

solute place for *Episcopacy*, that all former *Divines* had idly over-look'd: For, *Sirs*, being in the *Greek* Κύριος which is to say in true and strict translation, *Lords*, *what more plain than that of old*, Episcopacy *was not only the acknowledg'd Government*, *but that Bishops were formerly Peers of the Realm*, *and so ought to sit in the House of the Lords*. Or, suppose that you have a mind to commend to your People *Kingly Government*; you must not take any place that is plainly to the purpose, but that of the *Evangelist*, *Seek first the Kingdom of God*. From which words the Doctrine will plainly be; *That Monarchy or Kingly-Government is most according to the Mind of God*. For it is not said, Seek the *Parliament* of God, the *Army* of God, or the *Committee of Safety* of God; but it is, Seek the *Kingdom of God*. And who could expect less? Immediatley after this, the *King* came in, and the *Bishops* were restored. Again Sir, because I would willingly

willingly be understood, Suppose you design'd to preach about *Election* and *Reprobation*: As for the eight Chapter to the *Romans*, that's too too well known: But there's a little private place in the *Psalms* that will do the business as well, *Psal.* 90. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my Soul.* The Doctrine which naturally flowes from the words, will be, *That amongst the multitudes of thoughts, there is a great thought of Election and Reprobation.* And then away with the point according as the Preacher is inclined. Or, suppose lastly, that you were not fully satisfied that *Pluralities* were lawfull or convenient: May I be so bold, Sir, I pray what Text would you chuse to preach upon against *Non-residents*? Certainly nothing ever was better pick'd than that of St *Matth.* 1. 2. *Abraham begat Isaac.* A clear place against *Non residents*: For had *Abraham* not resided, but discontinued

from *Sarah* his Wife, he could never have begot *Isaac*.

But it is high time, Sir, to make an end of their Preaching, leſt you be as much tired with the repitition of it, as the People were little benefited, when they heard it. I ſhall only mind you, Sir, of one thing more, and that is the rediculous, ſenſeleſs and inuntended uſe, which many of them make of *Concordances*. I ſhall give you but one inſtance of it, all though I could furniſh you with an hundred printed ones. The Text, Sir, is this, *Gal.* 6. 15. *For in* Chriſt Jeſus *neither Circumciſion nor Uncircumciſion availeth any thing, but a new Creature*. Now all the World know the meaning of this to be, that let a man be of what Nation he will, Jew or Gentile, if he amends his life, and walks according to the Goſpel he ſhall be accepted with God. But this is not the way that pleaſes them: They muſt bring in to the Sermon, to no purpoſe at all, a vaſt heap

heap of places of Scripture (which the *Concordance* will furnish them with) where the word *new* is mentioned: And the Observation must be, That *God is for new things; God is for a new Creature.* St. John. 19. 41. *Now in the place where he was Crucified, there was a Garden; and in the Garden a new Sepulchre, wherein was never Man yet laid; there laid they* Jesus: And again: St. *Mark.* 16. 17. *Christ* tells his Disciples, That they that are true Believers, shall cast out Devils & speak *with new tongues:* And likewise the Prophet teaches us, *Isa.* 42. 10. *Sing unto the Lord a* new Song, *and his Praises unto the end of the Earth.* Whence it is plain, that *Christ* is not for *old things*; he is not for an *old Sepulchre*; he is not for *old Tongues*; he is not for an *old Song*; he is not for the *old Creature*; *Christ* is for the *new Creature*: *Circumcision and Uncircumcision availeth nothing, but the new Creature.* And what do we read concerning *Sampson*,

Judg. 15. 15. Is it not, that he slew a thousand of the *Philistines* with one *new Jaw-bone*? An old one might have killed its tens, its twenties, its hundreds; but it must be a *new Jaw-bone* that's able to kill a thousand. God is for the *new Creature*.

But may not some say, Is God altogether for new things? How comes it about then that the Prophet sayes, *Isa.* 1. 13, 14 *Bring no more vain Oblations, &c. your New-Moons and your appointed Feasts my Soul hateth?* And again, what means that, *Deut.* 32. 17, 19. *They sacrificed unto Devils, and to New Gods, whom they knew not; to New-Gods, that came newly up: And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them?* To which I answer; that God indeed is not for *New-Moons*, nor for *New-Godds*; but, excepting *Moons* and *Godds*, he is for new things: God is for the *New-Creature*.

It is possible, Sir, that some-body, besids your self, may be so vain as to read

reade this Letter; and they may perhaps tell you, that there be no such silly and useless people as I have described; and if there be, there be not above two or three in a County; or should there be more, it is no such comp'aining matter, seeing that the same happens in other Professions, in *Law* and *Physick*: In both which there be many a contemptible Creature.

Such therefore as these may be pleased to know, that if there had been need, I could have told them either the *Book* and very *Page*, almost of all that has been spoken about Preaching; or else the *when* and *where*, and the *Person* that preached it.

As to the second, *viz.* That the Clergy are Almightly furnished with Learning and Prudence, except ten, twenty, or so; I shall not say any thing my self, because a very great *Scholar* of our Nation shall speak for me, who tells us, *that such Preaching as is usual, is an hindrance of Salvation*.

vation, rather than a means to it. And what he intends by *usuall*, I shall not here go about to explain.

As to the last, I shall also in short answer: That if the advancement of the true Religion, & the eternal Salvation of a man, were no more considerable than the health of the Body, and the security of his Estate, we need not be more solicitous about the Learning and prudence of the *Clergy*, than of the *Lawyers* and *Physitians*: But being, we believe it to be otherwise, surely we ought to be more concern'd for the Reputation, and success, of the one, than of the other.

I come now, Sir, to the second Part, that was designed, *viz.* the *Poverty* of some of the Clergy: By whose mean condition, their sacred Profession is much disparaged, and their Doctrine undervalued.

What large provisions of old, God was pleased to make for the *Priesthood*, and upon what reasons, is easily seen to any one that looks but into the

the *Bible*. The *Levites*, it is true, were left out in the Diviſion of the Inheritance; not to their loſs, but to their great temporal advantage: for whereas, had they been common ſharers with the reſt, a twelf part only would have been their juſt allowance, God was pleaſed to ſettle upon them a tenth; and that without any trouble or charge of Tillage: Which made their portion much more conſiderable than the reſt.

And as this proviſion was very bountiful, ſo the reaſons, no queſtion, were very divine and ſubſtantial: Which ſeem chiefly to be theſe two:

Firſt, that the *Prieſt-hood* might be altogether at leaſure for the Service of God, and that they of that Holy Order might not be diſtracted with the cares of the World, and interrupted by every Neighbour's Horſe or Cow, that breaks their hedges, or ſhackles their Corn: But, that living a kind of ſpiritual life; and being removed a little from all worldly affairs,

they

they might alwayes be fit to receive holy Inſpirations, and alwayes ready to ſearch out the mind of God, and to adviſe and direct the People therein. Not, as if this divine exemption of them from the common troubles and cares of this life, was intended as an opportunity of Luxury and Lazineſs; for certainly there is a labour beſides digging; And there is a true carefulneſs without following the Plough, & looking after their Cattle. And ſuch was the Employment of theſe holy Men of old: their care and buſineſs was to pleaſe God, and to charge themſelves with the welfare of all his People: Which thing he that does with a good and ſatisfied Conſcience, I'll aſſure you, he has a task upon him, much beyond them that have for their care, their hundreds of Oxen, and five hundreds of Sheep.

Another reaſon that this large allowance was made to the *Prieſts*, was, That they might be enabled to relieve the

the Poor, to entertain Strangers, and thereby to encourage People in the wayes of Godlineſs: For they being in a peculiar manner the Servants of God, God was pleaſed to intruſt in their hands a portion more then ordinary of the good things of the land, as the ſafeſt ſtore-houſe and treaſury for ſuch as were in need. That in all Ages therefore, there ſhould be a continued tollerable Maintainance for the Clergy; the ſame reaſons, as well as many others, make us think to be very neceſſary. Unleſs, they'll count Money, and Victuals to be only Types and Shadows, and ſo to ceaſe with the Ceremonial-Law.

For where the *Miniſter* is pinch'd, as to the tollerable conveniences of this Life, the chief of his care and time muſt be ſpent, not in an impertinent conſidering what Text of Scriptures will be moſt uſeful for his Pariſh, what Inſtructions moſt ſeaſonable, and what Authors beſt to be conſulted: But the chief of his

thoughts

thoughts, and his main business must be to study how to live that week: Where he shall have bread for his Family? Whose Sow has lately Pigg'd? Whence will come the next rejoycing Goose, or the next cheerful Basket of Apples? How far to *Lammas*, or *Offerings*? When shall we have another Christning and Cakes, and who is likely to Marry or Dye? These are very seasonable considerations, and worthy of a Mans thoughts. For a Family cannot be maintain'd by Texts and Contexts: and the Child that lies crying in the Cradle, will not be satisfied without a little Milk, and perhaps Sugar, though there be a small *German System* in the house.

But suppose he does get into a little hole over the Oven, with a Lock to it, call'd his *Study*, toward the latter end of the week (for you must know, Sir, there is very few Texts of Scripture that can be divided at sooneſt before *Friday*-night; and some there be that will never be divi-

ded

ded but upon *Sunday*-morning, and that not very early, but either a little before they go, or in the going to Church:) I say, suppose the *Gentleman* gets thus into his Study; one may very near guess, what is his first thought when he comes there, *viz.* that the last Kilderkin of Drink is near departed; and that he has but one poor single Groat in the house, and there's Judgment and Execution ready to come out against it, for Milk and Eggs. Now, Sir, can any Man think that one thus rack'd, and tortur'd, can be seriously intent half an hour to contrive anything that might be of reall advantage to his People? Besides; perhaps that week he has met with some dismal crosses and most undoing misfortunes: There was a scurvy condition'd Mole that broke into his Pasture, and Plow'd up the best part of his Glebe: and a little after that, came a couple of spiteful ill-favour'd Crows, and trampled down the little remaining Grass: A-

nother day, having but four Chickens, sweep comes the Kite, and carries away the fatteſt and hopefulleſt of all the Brood. Then after all this, came the Jackdaws and Sterlings (idle Birds that they are!) and they ſcattered and carried away from his thin thatch'd houſe, forty or fifty of the beſt ſtraws: And to make him compleatly unhappy after all theſe afflictions, another day, that he had a pair of Breeches on, coming over a perverſe Stile, he ſuffered very much in careleſly lifting over his Leg. Now, what Pariſh can be ſo inconſiderate and unreaſonable, as to look for any thing from one, whoſe phanſie is thus check'd, and whoſe underſtanding is thus ruffl'd and diſordered. They may aſſoon expect comfort and conſolation from him that lies rack'd with the Gout and Stone, as from a *Divine* thus broken and ſhatter'd in his Fortunes.

But wee'l grant, that he meets not with any of theſe ſo frightful diſaſters,

but

but that he goes into his Study with a Mind as calm as the Evening: For all that, upon *Sunday*, we must be content even with what God shall please to send us. For as for *Books*, he is (for want of money) so moderately furnish'd, that except it be a small *Geneva-Bible*, so small, as it will not be desired to ly open of it self; together with a certain *Concordance* thereunto belonging; as also a Book for all kind of *Latine* Sentences, called *Polyanthea*; with some Exposition upon the *Catechism* (a portion of which is to be got by heart, and to be put off for his own;) and perhaps Master *Caryl* upon *Pineda* Mr. *Dodd* upon the Commandments; and Mr. *Clerks* Lives of Famous Men, both in Church and State; such as Mr. *Carter* of *Norwich*, that used to eat such abundance of Pudden: Besides (I say) these, there is scarce any thing to be found but a boudget of old stitch'd Sermons, hung up behind the door with a few broken

Cures, two or three yards of Whipcord, and perhaps a Saw and a Hammer to prevent dilapidations. Now, what may not a *Divine* do, though but of ordinary parts, and unhappy education, with such learned helps and assistants as these? No Vice surely durst stand before him, nor Heresie affront him.

And furthermore, Sir, it is to be considered, that he that is but thus meanly provided for, it is not his only infelicity that he has neither Time, Mind, nor Books, to improve himself for the inward benefit and satisfaction of his People, but also that he is not capable of doing that outward good amongst the needy, which is a great ornament to that holy Profession, and a considerable advantage towards the having his Doctrine believed and practised in a degenerate World. And that which augments the misery, whether he be able or not, it is expected from him. If there comes a *Brief* to *Town*, for the *Mi-*

nister

niſter to caſt in his Mite, will not ſatisfie, unleſſe he can create ſix-pence or a ſhilling to put into the Box, for a ſtale to decoy-in the reſt of the Pariſh: Nay, he that has but Twenty or Thirty Pounds *per annum*, if he bids not up as high as the beſt in the Pariſh, in all acts of Charity, he is accounted carnal and earthly-minded only becauſe he durſt not coin, and cannot worke Miracles. And let there come never ſo many Beggers, half of theſe I'll ſecure you, ſhall preſently enquire for the Miniſter's houſe: For God ſay they, certainly dwells there, and has laid up for us ſufficient relief.

I know many of the *Laity* are uſually ſo extreamly tender of the Spiritual welfare of the Clergy, that they are apt to wiſh them but very ſmall temporall Goods, leſt their inward ſtate ſhould be in danger, (A thing they need not much fear, ſince that effectuall Humiliation of *Henrie* the eight) For, ſay they, the great

Tithes, large Glebes, good victuals and warm Cloaths, do but puff up the *Priest*, making him fat, and foggy, and useless, and fill him with Pride, vain glory, and all kind of inward wickedness, and pernicious corruption. We see this plain (say they) in the *Whoore of Babylon*: To what a degree of Luxury and Intemperance (besids a great deal of false Doctrine) have Riches and Honour raised up that *Strumpet*? How does she strut it, and swagger it over all the World, terrifying Princes, and despising Kings and Emperours? The Clergy, if ever we would expect any edification from them, ought to be dyeted and kept low, to be meek and humble, quiet, and stand in need of a Pot of Milk from their next Neighbour, and alwayes be very loth to ask for their very Right, for fear of making any disturbance in the Parish, or seeming to understand, or have any respect for this vile and out-ward World. Under the *Law* indeed

indeed, in those old times of darkness and eating, the Priests had their first and second dishes, their Milk and Honey, their Manna and Quails, their outward also and inward Vestments: But now under the *Gospel*, and in times of light and Fasting, a much more sparing Dyet is fitter, and a single-Coat, though it be never so ancient and thin, is fully sufficient. We must now look, say they, (if we would be the better for them) for an hardy and labouring Clergy, that is mortified to an Horse, and all such pampering Vanities; & that can foot it five or six miles in the dirt, and preach till Star-light for as many shillings; as also a sober and temperate Clergy, that will not eat so much as the Laity, but that the least Pigg, and the least Sheaf, and the least of every thing, may satisfie their Spiritualship. And besids, a Money-renouncing Clergy, that can abstain from seeing a penny a month together, unless it be when the *Collectors* and *Visitatson-*

ers come. These are all Gospel Dispensations, and great Instances of Patience, Contentedness, and resignation of Affections to all the Emptinesses and Fooleries of this Life.

But, cannot a Clergy-man chuse rather to lie upon Feathers than an Hurdle, but he must be idle, soft and effeminate? May he not desire wholsome Food, and refresh Drink, unless he be a Cheat, a Hypocrite and an Impostor? and must he needs be void of all Grace, though he have a shilling in his Purse after the Rates are crost, d? And full of Pride and Vanity, though his House stands not upon Crutches, and though his Chimney is to be seen a foot above the thatch? Oh, how prettily and temperately may half a score Children be maintained with almost Twenty Pounds *per Annum*! What a handsom shift a poor ingenious and frugal *Divine* will make, to take it by turns and wear a Cassock one year, and a pair of Breeches another? What a becoming

thing

thing is it, for him that serves at the Altar, to fill the Dung-Cart in dry weather, and to heat the Oven, and pill Hemp in wet? And what a pleasant sight is it, to see the Man of God fetching up his single melancholy Cow, from a small rib of Land, that is scarce to be found without a Guide? Or, to be seated upon a soft and well-grinded pouch of Meal? Or, to be planted upon a Pannier, with a pair of Geese or Turkies, bobbing out their heads from under his Canonical-Coat, as you cannot but remember the Man, Sir, that was thus accomplish'd? Or, to find him raving about the Yards, or keeping his Chamber close, because the Duck lately miscarried of an Egg, or, that the never-failing Hen has unhappily forsaken her wonted-Nest?

And now, shal we think that such Employments as these can any ways consist with due reverence, or tolerable respect from a Parish? And he speaks altogether at a venture, that either sayes that this is false, or, at least it need not

be so, notwithstanding the mean condition of some of the Clergy. For let any one make it out to me, which way it is possible, that a Man should be able to maintain perhaps eight or ten in his Family, with twenty or thirty pounds *per annum*, without a most intolerable dependence upon his Parish, and without committing himself to such vileness, as will, in all likelihood, render him contemptible to his People. Now, where the In-come is so pitifully small (which, I'll assure you, is the portion of hundreds of the Clergy of this Nation) which way shall he manage it for the subsistance of himself, and his Family? If he keeps the Glebe in his own hand (which he may easily do, almost in the hollow of it) what increase can he expect from a couple of Apple-trees, a brood of Ducklings, a Hemp-Land, and as much Pasture as is just able to Summer a Cow? And for his Tithes, he either Rents them out to a Lay-man, who will be very unwilling to be his Tenant, unless he

may

may be sure to save by the bargain at least a third part: or else he compounds for them; and then as for his Money, he shall have it when all the rest of the World be paid. But if he thinks fit to take his dues in kind, he then either demands his true and utmost Right; and if so, it is a great hazzard if he be not counted a Caterpillar, a Muck-worm, a very Earthly-minded Man, and too much sighted into this lower World; which was made, as many of the Laity think, altogether for themselves: Or else he must tamely commit himself to that little Dose of the Creature, that shall be pleased to be proportioned out unto him: Chusing rather to starve in peace and quietness, than to gain his right by noise and disturbance: The best of all these wayes that a Clergy-man shall think fit for his preferment to be manag'd where it is so small, are such, as will undoubtedly make him either to be hated and reviled, or else pitifully poor and disesteemed.

But

But has it not gone very hard in all Ages with the Men of God? Was not our *Lord* and *Master*, our Great and *High-Priest*? and was not his fare low, and his Life full of trouble? And was not the Condition of most of his *Disciples* very Mean? Were not they notably pinch'd, and severely treated after him? And is it not the Duty of every Christian to imitate such holy Patterns: But especially of the Clergy, who are to be shining Lights and visible Examples, and therefore to be satisfied with a very little Morsel, and to renounce ten times as much of the World as other People? And is not Patience better than the great Tithes and Contentednesse to be preferred before large Fees and Customs? Is there any Comparison between the expectation of a cringing Bowe, or low Hat, and mortification to all such Vanities and Fopperies; especially with those, who in a peculiar manner hope to receive their Inheritance, and make their Harvest in the next Life? This

was well thought of indeed: But for all that, if you please, Sir, we will consider a little, some of those remarkable Inconviences, that do most undoubtedly attend upon the Ministers being so meanly provided for.

First of all, the Holy men of God, or the Ministery in generall, hereby is disesteemed, and rendered of small account. For though they be called the *Men of God*, yet when it is observed, that God seems to take but little care of them, in making them tolerable Provisions for this life, or that men are suffered to take away that which God was pleased to provide for them, the People are presently apt to think, that they belong to God no more than ordinary folk, if so much. And although it is not to be question'd but that the laying on of hands is a most Divine Institution; yet it is not all the *Bishops* Hands in the World, laid upon a Man, if he be either notoriously ignorant, or dismally poor, that can procure him any hearty and lasting re-

spect

spect. For though we find that some of the *Disciples* of *Christ*, that carried on and established the great designs of the Gospel, where Persons of ordinary Employments and Education; yet we see but little reason to think that Miracles should be continued to do that, which natural endeavours, assisted by the Spirit of God, are able to perform. And if *Christ* were still upon Earth to make Bread for such as are his peculiar Servants, & Declarers of his Mind & Doctrine, the Laity, if they pleas'd should eat up all the Corn themselves, as well the tenth sheaf as the other; but seeing it is otherwise, and that that miraculous Power was not left to the succeeding Clergy, for them to beg their Bread, or depend for their subsistance upon the good pleasure and humour of their Parish, is a thing that renders that holy Office very much slighted and disgraced.

That constitution therefore of our Church was a most prudent design, that sayes, that all who are Ordain'd,

shall

shall be Ordain'd to somewhat: Not Ordain'd at random, to Preach in general to the whole world, as they travel up and down the Road, but to this or that particular Parish. And no question, the reason was to prevent Spiritual Pedling, and gadding up and down the Countrey with a bag of trifling and insignificant Sermons; enquiring who will buy any Doctrine? So that no more might be received into Holy Orders, than the Church had Provision for. But so very little is this regarded, that if a young *Divinity-intender* has but got a Sermon of his own, or of his Father's, although he knows not where to get a Meals-Meat, or one Penny of Money by his Preaching, yet he gets a Qualification from some Benefic'd-Man or other, who perhaps is no more able to keep a Curate, than I am to keep ten Foot-boyes, and so he is made a Preacher. And upon this account I have known an ordinary Divine, whose living would but just keep himself and his Family

Family from Melancholy and Diſpair, ſhroud under his protection as many *Curats* as the beſt Nobleman in the Land has *Chaplains*. Now, many ſuch as theſe go into Orders againſt the Sky falls; for ſeeing no more likelihood of any Preferment coming to them, than you or I do of being Secretaries of State. Now, ſo often as any ſuch as theſe, for want of Maintenance, are put to any unworthy and diſgraceful ſhifts, this reflicts diſparagement upon all that Order of Holy Men.

And we muſt have a great care of comparing our ſmall-preferr'd Clergy with thoſe but of the like Fortune in the Church of *Rome*, they having many Arts and Devices of gaining reſpect and reverence to their Office, which we count neither juſt nor warrantable. We deſign no more than to be in a likely capacity of doing good, and not diſcrediting our Religion, nor ſuffering the Goſpel to be diſeſteemed: But their aim is clearly, not only by

Cheats,

Cheats, contriv'd Tales, and feigned Miracles, to get Money in abundance; but to be worshipped, and almost edified, is as little as they will content themselves withall. For how can it be, but the People belonging to a Church, wherein the Supream Governour is believed never to erre, either purely by vertue of his own single Wisdom, or by the help of his Inspiring Chair, or by the assistance of his little Infallible Cadinals. (for it matters not where the root of not being mistaken lies) I say, how can it be, but that all that are Believers of such extraordinary knowledge, must needs stand in most direfull awe, not only of the foresaid Supream, but of all that adhere to him, or are in any Ghostly Authority under him? And although it so happens, that this same extraordinary knowing Person is pleased to trouble himself with a good large proportion of this vile and contemptible World, so that should he now and then, upon some odd and cloudy day,

Family from Melancholy and Diſpair, ſhroud under his protection as many *Curats* as the beſt Nobleman in the Land has *Chaplains*. Now, many ſuch as theſe go into Orders againſt the Sky falls; for ſeeing no more likelihood of any Preferment coming to them, than you or I do of being Secretaries of State. Now, ſo often as any ſuch as theſe, for want of Maintenance, are put to any unworthy and diſgraceful ſhifts, this reflicts diſparagement upon all that Order of Holy Men.

And we muſt have a great care of comparing our ſmall-preferr'd Clergy with thoſe but of the like Fortune in the Church of *Rome*, they having many Arts and Devices of gaining reſpect and reverence to their Office, which we count neither juſt nor warrantable. We deſign no more than to be in a likely capacity of doing good, and not diſcrediting our Religion, nor ſuffering the Goſpel to be diſeſteemed: But their aim is clearly, not only by

Cheats,

Cheats, contriv'd Tales, and feigned Miracles, to get Money in abundance; but to be worshipped, and almost edified, is as little as they will content themselves withall. For how can it be, but the People belonging to a Church, wherein the Supream Governour is believed never to erre, either purely by vertue of his own single Wisdom, or by the help of his Inspiring Chair, or by the assistance of his little Infallible Cadinals. (for it matters not where the root of not being mistaken lies) I say, how can it be, but that all that are Believers of such extraordinary knowledge, must needs stand in most direfull awe, not only of the foresaid Supream, but of all that adhere to him, or are in any Ghostly Authority under him? And although it so happens, that this same extraordinary knowing Person is pleased to trouble himself with a good large proportion of this vile and contemptible World, so that should he now and then, upon some odd and cloudy day,

 coun-

count himself mortal, and be a little mistaken; yet, he has chanced to make such a comfortable provision for himself and his followers; that he must needs be sufficiently valued and honoured amongst all: Which had he but just enough to keep himself from catching cold, and starving, so long as he is invested with such Spirituall Soveraignty, and such a peculiar priviledge of being *Infallible*, most certainly, without quarrelling, he takes the Road of all Mankind.

And as for the most inferior Priests of all, although they pretend not to such perfection of knowledge, yet there be many extraordinary things, which they are believed to be able to do, which beget in the People a most venerable respect towards them; such is the power of Making God in the Sacraments; a thing that must infallibly procure an infinite admiration of him that can do it, though he scarce knows the ten Commandements, and has not a farthing to buy himself Bread. And

then

then when *Christ* is made, their giving but half of him to the Laity, is a thing also, if it be minded, that will very much help on the business, and make the People stand at a great distance from the Clergy. I might instance likewise in their auricular Confession, injoyning of Penance, forgiving of Sins, making of *Saints*, freeing People from Purgatory, and many such useful Tricks they have, and Wonders they can do to draw in the forward believing *Laity* into a most Right Worshipfull Opinion, and Honourable Esteem of them. And therefore seeing our Holy Church of *England* counts it not just, not warrantable thus to Cheat the World, by belying the Scriptures, and by making use of such falshood and stratagems to gain respect and reverence: It behoves us certainly to wish for, and endeavour all such means as are usefull, and lawfull, for the obtaining the same.

I might here, I think, conveniently add, that though many Performents a-

mongſt the Clergy of *Rome* may poſſibly be as ſmall as ſome of ours in *England*, yet we are to be put in mind of one more excellent Contrivances of theirs, and that is, the deniall of Marriage to Prieſts, whereby they are freed from the Expences of a Family, and a train of young Children, that, upon my word will ſoon ſuck up the Milk of a Cow or two, and grind in pieces a few ſheaves of Corn. The Church of *England* therefore, thinking it not fit to oblige their Clergy to a Single-Life; and I ſuppoſe are not likely to alter their Opinion, unleſs they receive better reaſons for it from *Rome*, than hath been as yet ſent over; he makes a compariſon very wide from the purpoſe, that goes about to try the Livings here in *England* by thoſe of the Church of *Rome*; There being nothing more frequent in our Church, than for a Clergy-man to have three or four Children to get Bread for, by that time one in theirs ſhall be allowed to go into Holy-Orders.

There

There is ſtill one thing remaining, which ought not to be forgotten (a thing that is ſometimes urged, I know by the Papiſts, for the ſingle life of the Prieſts) that does alſo much leſſen the the Eſteem of our Miniſtery; and that is the poor and contemptible Employment that many Children of the Clergy are forced upon, by reaſon of the meanneſes of their Fathers Revenue. It has happen'd, I know, ſometimes that whereas it has pleaſed God to beſtow upon the Clergy-men a very ſufficient Income; yet ſuch has been his careleſneſs, as he hath made but pitiful proviſion for his Children. And on the other ſide, notwithſtanding all the good care and thoughtfulneſſe of the Father, it has happen'd at other times that the Children, beyond the power of all advice, have ſeemed to be reſolved for Debauchery; but to ſee Clergy-mens Children condemn'd to the Walking of Horſes, to wait upon a Topſter, or the like, and that only becauſe their Father was not

able to allow them a more Gentle Education, are such Employments that cannot but bring great disgrace and dishonour upon the Clergy.

But this is not all the inconvenience that attends the small Income that is the portion of some Clergymen; for besides that the Clergy in generall is disesteemed, they are likely also to do but little good in their Parish. For it is a hard matter for the People to believe that he talks any thing to the purpose, that wants ordinary Food for his Family, and that his Advice and Exposition can come from above, that is farce defended against the Weather. I have heard a travelling poor Man beg with very good Reason, and a great stream of seasonable Rhetorick, and yet it has been very little minded, because his Cloaths were torn, or at least out of fashion: And, on the other side, I have heard but an ordinary saying, proceeding from a fine Suit, and a goodly lusty Title of Honour, highly admired;

red; which would not possibly have been hearkned to, had it been uttered by a meaner person; yet by all means because it was a phansie of his *Worships*, it must be counted high, and notably expressed, If indeed this World were made of sincere and pure beaten Vertues, like the Gold of the first Age, than such idle and fond prejudices would be a very vain supposal: And the Doctrine that proceeded from the most tatared and contimptible Habit, and the most sparing Diet, would be as acceptable as that which flowed from a Silken Cassock, and the best Chear: But seeing the World is not absolutely perfect, it is to be questioned, whether he that runs upon Trust for every Ounce of Provision he spends in his Family, can scarce look from his Pulpit into any Seat of the Church, but that he spyes some body or other that he is beholden to, & depends upon; and for want of money has scarce confidence to speak handsomly to his Sexton; it is to be questioned, I say,

whether one thus destitute of all tolerable substance, and thus shatter'd, and distracted with most necessary cares, can either invent with discretion, or utter with courage any thing that may be beneficiall to his People, whereby they may become his diligent attenders, and hearty respecters.

And as the People do almost resolve against being amended, or bettered by that Minister's Preaching, whose circumstances, as to this life, are so bad, and his condition so low; so likewise is their Devotion very cool, and indifferent in hearing, from such a one, the *Prayers* of the Church. The *Divine Service*, all the World know, is the same, if read in the most magnificent *Cathedrall*, or in the most private *Parlour*: Or, if perform'd by the *Archbishop* himself, or by the meanest of his *Priests*: But as the Solemnity of the place, besides the Consecration of it to God Almighty, do much influence upon the Devotion of the People; so also the quality and condition

dition of the Person that reads it. And although there be not that acknowledged difference between a Priest comfortably provided for, and him that is in the Thorns and Bryars, as there is between one placed in great Dignity and Authority, and one that is in less; yet such a difference the people will make, that they will scarce hearken to what is read by the one, and yet be most religiously attentive to the other. Not surely that any one can think, that he whose countenance is chearly, and his Barns full, can petition Heaven more effectually, or prevail with God for the forgiveness of a greater sin, than he who is pittifully pale, and is not owner of an Ear of Corn: Yet most certainly they do not delight to confess their Sins, and sing Praises to God with him, who sighs more for want of Money and Victualls, than for his Trespasses and Offences. Thus it is, and will be, do you and I (Sir) what we can to the contrary. Did our Church indeed believe

with

with the *Papists*, every Person rightfully Ordained, to be a kind of God Almighty, working Miracles and doing Wonders; then would People most readily prostrate themselves to every thing in Holy Orders, though it could not but just creep: But being our Church counts those of the Clergy to be but Mortal Men (though peculiarly dedicated to God and his Service) their behaviour, their condition, and circumstances of life will necessarily come into our value, and esteem of them. And therefore it is to no purpose for Men to say, that this need not be; it being but meer prejudice, humour, and phansi: And that if the Man be but truely in Holy Orders, that's the great matter; And from thence come Blessings, Absolution and Intercession through Christ with God: And that it is not *Philosophy*, *Languages*, *Ecclesiasticall History*, *Prudence*, *Discretion*, and *Reputation*, by which the Minister can help us on towards Heaven. Notwithstanding

ſtanding this, I ſay again, that ſeeing Men are Men, and ſeeing that we are of the Church of *England* and not of that of *Rome*, theſe things ought to be weighed and conſidered; and for want of being ſo, our Church of *England* has ſuffered much.

And I am almoſt confident, that ſince the Reformation, nothing has more hindred People from a juſt eſtimation of a Form of *Prayer*, and our *Holy Liturgie*, than employing a company of Boys, and old illiterate Mumblers, to read the Service. And, I do verily believe, that at this very day, eſpecially in *Cities* and *Corporations*, (which make up the third part of our Nation) there is nothing that does more keep back ſome diſſatisfied People from Church till the *Service* be over, than that it is read by ſome Ten or Twelve-pound-Man, with whoſe parts and education they are ſo well acquainted, as to have reaſon to know, that he has but juſt skill enough to reade the *Leſſons* with twice conning

conning over. And though the Office of the Reader, be only to read word for word, & neither to invent or expound; yet People love he should be a Person of such worth and knowledge, as it may be supposed he understands what he reads. And although for some it were too burthensome a task to read the Service twice a day, and Preach as often, yet certainly it were much better if the People had but one Sermon in a fortnight or month, so the Service were performed by a knowing and valuable Person, than to run an unlearned rout of contemptible People into Holy Orders, on purpose only to say the Prayers of the Church, who perhaps shall understand very little more than a hollow pipe made of Tin or Wainscot.

Neither do I here at all reflect upon *Cathedrals*, Where the Prayers are usually read by some grave and worthy Person: And as for the unlearned Singers, whereby Boys or Men, there is no more complaint to be

be made, as to this case, than that they have not an all-understanding *Organ*, or a prudent & discreet *Cornet*.

Neither need People be afraid that the Minister for want of Preaching should grow stiff and rusty, supposing he came not into the Pulpit every week: For he may spend his time very honestly, either by taking better care of what he preaches, and by seriously considering what is most useful and seasonable for the People: and not what Subject he can preach upon with most ease, or upon what Text he can make a brave speech, for which no body shall be the better; or, where he can best steal without being discover'd, as is the practise of many *Divines* in private Parishes: Or else he may spend it in visiting the Sick, instructing the Ignorant, and recovering such as are gone astray: For, though their be Churches built for publick Assemblies, for publick Instructions, and Exhortation; and though there be not many absolutely plain places of Scripture that do oblige the

the Minister to walk from house to house; yet certainly People might receive much more advantage from such charitable Visits, and friendly Conferances, than from generall Discourses levelled at the whole World; where perhaps the greatest part of the time shall be spent in uieless Prefaces, Dividings and Flourishings. Which thing is very practicable, expecting some vast Parishes: In which also it is much better to do good to some, than to none at all.

There is but one Calamity more that I shall mention, which though it need not absolutely, yet it does too frequently accompany the low condition of many of the Clergy: And that is, it is a great hazzard, if they be not *idle*, *intemperate*, and *scandalous*, I say, I cannot prove it strictly and undeniably that a Man smally beneficed, must of necessity be dissolute and debauched: But when we consider, how much he lies subject to the humour of all kind of Reprobates, and how easily he

he is tempted from his own house of Poverty and Melancholy: it is to be feared, that he will be willing too often to forsake his own Study of a few scurvy Books, and his own Habitation of Darkness, where there is seldom eating or drinking, for a good lightsome one, where there is a bountifull provision of both. And when he comes here, though he swears not at all, yet he must be sure to say nothing to them that does it, by all that they can think of: And though he judge it not fit to lead the Forelorn in Vice and Prophaness; yet, if he goes about to Damp a Frolick, there is great danger, not only of losing his *Sunday*-Dinner, but all opportunities of such future Refreshments, for his Niceness and Squeamishness. And such as are but at all disposed to these lewd kind of Meetings; besids the Devil, he shall have sollicitors enough, who count all such revelling occasions very unsavory and unhallow'd, unless they have the presence of some Clergy-man to

sanctifie

ſanctifie the Ordinance: Who, if he ſticks at his Glaſs, bleſs him, and call him but *Doctor*, and it ſlides preſently. I take no dilight, I muſt confeſs, to inſiſt upon this; but only I could very much wiſh that ſuch of our Governours, as go amongſt our ſmall-preferr'd Clergy, to take a view of the condition of the Church and Chancel, that they would but make enquiry whether the Miniſter himſelf be not much out of repair.

I have now done, Sir, with the Grounds of that diſ-eſteem that many of the Clergy lie under, both by the *Ignorance* of ſome, and the extream *Poverty* of others: And I ſhould have troubled you no further, but that I thought it convenient not to omit the particular occaſions that do concur to the making up of many of our Clergy ſo pitifully poor and contemptible.

The firſt thing that contributes much to the *Poverty of the Clergy*, is the great *ſcarcity of Livings*. *Churches* and *Chappels* we have enough, it is

to

be confessed if compared with the bigness of our *Nation*: But in respect of that infinite number that are in Holy Orders, it is a very plain case that there is a very great want. And, I am confident, that in a very little time I could procure hundreds, that should ride both Sun and Moon down, and be everlastingly yours, if you could help them but to a Living of Twenty-five, or Thirty Pounds a year: And this I suppose to be chiefly occasioned upon these two accounts; either from the *Eagerness* and *Ambition* that some people have of going into Orders; or from the *refuge* of others into the Church, who being otherwise disappoin ed of a Lively-hood, hope to make sure of one by that means.

First, I say, that which encreases the unprovided-for number of the Clergy, is people posting into Orders, before they know their Message or business, onely out of a certain kind of Pride and Ambition. Thus some are hugely in love with the meer Title of

Priest, or Deacon; never considering how they shall live, or what good they are likely to do in their Office: But only they have a phansie that a Cassock, if it be made long, is a very handsome Garment, though it never be paid for: And that the Desk is clearly the best, and the Pulpit the highest Seat in all the Parish: That they shal take place of most, but *Esquires* and *Right Worshipfuls*: That they shall have the honour of being Spirituall Guids and Counsellors. And they shal be supposed to understand more of the mind of God than ordinary, though perhaps they scarce know the *old Law* from the *new*, nor the *Canon* from the *Apocrypha*. Many I say, such as these there be, who know not where to get two Groats, nor what they have to say to the People, but only because they have heard that the Office of a Minister is the most Noble and Honourable Employment in the World, therefore they, not knowing in the least what the meaning of that is, Or-

ders

ders by all means must have, though it be to the disparagement of that Holy Function.

Others also there be, who are not so highly possess'd with the meer dignity of the Office, and honourableness of the Employment, but think, had they but a License and Authority to Preach, Oh how they could pay it away! And that they can tell the People such strange things, as they never heard before in all their Lives: That they have got such a commanding Voice, such heart-breaking Expressions, such a peculiar Method of Text-dividing, and such notable Helps for the interpreting all difficulties in Scripture, that they can shew the People a much shorter way to Heaven, than has been as yet made known by any. Such a forwardness as this of going into Holy Orders, either meerly out of an ambitious humour of being called a priest, or of thinking they could do such feats and wonders if they might be but free of the Pulpit, has

filled the Nation with many more Divines, than there is any competent Maintenance for in the Church.

Another great crowd that is made in the Church, by those that take in there only as a place of *shelter* & *refuge*: Thus we have many turn Priests & Deacons, either for want of Employment in their Profession of *Law*, *Physick*, or the like; or having been unfortunate in their Trade, or having broken a Leg or an Arm, and so disabled from following their former Calling; or, having had the pleasure of spending their Estate, or being, (perhaps deservedly) disappointed of their Inheritance. The Church is a very large & good Sanctuary, and one Spiritual shilling is as good as three Temporality shillings. Let the hardest come to the hardest, if they can get by heart, *Quid est Fides? quid est Ecclesia? quot sunt Concilia Generalia?* and gain Orders, they may prove *Readers* or *Preachers* according as their Gifts and Opportunities shall lie. Now many such as these, the

Church

Church being not able to provide for (as there is no great reason that She should be sollicitous about it) must needs prove a very great disparagement to Her: They coming hither just as the old *Heathens* use to go to *Prayers*: When nothing would stop the anger of the Godds, then for a touch of Devotion: And if that be no way to get Victuals, rather than to starve let us *Read* or *Preach*.

In short, Sir, We are perfectly overstock'd with Professors of Divinity; There being scarce employment for half of those who undertake that Office. And unless we had some of the *Romish* Tricks, to ramble up & down, and cry *Pardons* and *Indulgences*: Or for want of a Living, have good store of Clients in the business of *Purgatory*, or the like, and so make such unrighteous Gains of Religion, it were certainly much better if many of them were otherways determined. Or unless we had some vent for our Learned ones beyond the Sea, and could transport

so many Tunn of *Divines* yearly as we do other commodities, with which the Nation is over-stocked; we do certainly very unadvisedly to bread up so many to that Holy Calling, or to suffer so many to steal into Orders, seeing there is not sufficient Work and Employment for them.

The next thing that does much heighten the Misery of our Church, as to the poverty of it, is the Gentries designing, not only the weak the lame, and usually the most ill-favour'd of their Children for the Office of the Ministry, but also such as they intend to settle nothing upon for their subsistence; leaving them wholly to the bare hops of Church-preferment. For, as they think, let the thing look how it will, it is good enough for the Church; and that if it has but Limbs enough to climb the Pulpit, and Eyes enough to find the day of the Month, it will serve well enough to Preach & Read Service: So likewise they think they have obliged the clergy very much

if

if they please to bestow two or three years Education upon a younger-Son at the *University*, and then commend him to the Grace of God, and the favour of the Church, without one penny of Money or Inch of Land. You must not think, that he will spoil his Eldest Son's Estate, or hazzard the lessening the Credit of the Family, to do that which may any way tend to the reputation and honour of the Clergy. And thus it comes to pass that you may commonly Ride ten Miles, and scarce meet with a *Divine* that is worth above two Spoons and a Pepper-Box, besides his Living, or Spirituall Preferments. For, as for the Land, that goes sweeping away with the Eldest Son, for the immortality of the Family; and as for the Money, that is usually employed for to bind out, and to set up other Children. And thus you shal have them make no doubt of giving five hundred or a thousand pounds for a stock to them: But for the poor *Divinity-Son*, if he gets but enough

to buy a broad Hat at second Hand, & and a small *System* or two of Faith, that's counted stock sufficient for him to set up withall. And possibly he might make some kind of shift in this World, if any Body will engage that he shall have neither Wife nor Children; But if it so falls out, that he leaves the World, and either the one or the other; in what a dismall condition are these likely to be, and how will their sad Calamities reflect upon the Clergy. I, So dismall a thing is this commonly judged, that those that at their departure out of this Life are piously and vertuously disposed, do usually reckon the taking care for the Relief of the poor *Ministers Widows*, to be an opportunity of as necessary Charity, as the mending of Highwayes, and the erecting of Hospitals.

But neither are spiritual Preferments only scarce by reason of that great number that lie hovering over them, and that they that are thus upon the wing, are usually destitute of any other Estate

and

and livelihood; but also when they come into possession of them, they finding for the most part nothing but a little Sauce, and second Course, Pigs, Geese, and Apples, must needs be put upon great perplexities for the standing necessaries of a Family. So that if it be enquired by any one, how comes it to pass that we have so many in Holy Orders, that understand so little, and that are able to do so little Service in the Church? If we would answer plainly and truly, we may say, because they are good for nothing else. For, shall we think that any man, that is not curs'd to uselessness, poverty & misery, will be content with Twentie or Thirty Pounds a Year? For though in the Bulk, it looks at first like a bountifull Estate; yet, if we think of it a little better, we shall find that an ordinary *Bricklayer*, or *Carpenter* (I mean not your great Undertakers, and Master-Workmen) that earns constantly but his two shillings a day, has clearly a better Revenue, and has

 certainly

certainly the command of more Money: For that he one has no dilapidations, and the like, to consume a great part of his weekly Wages, which you know how much the other is subject unto. So that as long as we have so many small and contemptible Livings belonging to our Church (let the World do what it can) we must expect that they should be supplyed by very lamentable and unserviceable things: For that no body else will meddle with them Unless one in an Age abounding with Money, Charity and Goodness, will Preach for nothing. For if Men of Knowledge, Prudence, and Wealth, have a phansie against a Living of Twentie or Thirty Pounds a year: There is no way to get them into such an undertaking, but by sending out a spiritual Press: For that very few Volunteers that are of worth (unless better encouraged) will go into that Holy Warfare: But it will be left to those who cannot devise how otherwise to live.

Neither must People say, that be-

ſides *Biſhopricks*, *Prebendries*, and the like, we have ſeverall brave Benefices, ſufficient to invite thoſe of the beſt Parts, Education, and Diſcretion. For imagin one Living in forty is worth a Hundred Pounds a year; And ſupplyed by a Man of Skill, and wholſome Counſell: What are the other thirty nine the better for that? What are the People about *Carliſle* better'd by his Inſtructions and advice who lives at *Dover*? It was certainly our *Saviour's* Mind, not only that the Goſpel ſhou'd be Preached to all *Nations* at firſt, but that the meaning & power of it ſhould be preſerved and conſtantly declared to all People, by ſuch as had judgement to do it.

Neither again muſt they ſay, that *Cities Corporations* & the great *Trading Towns* of this Nation, (which are the ſtrength and glory of it, and that contain the uſeful People of the World) are uſually inſtructed by very learned and judicious Perſons. For, I ſuppoſe, that our *Saviours* Deſign

was

not [illegible] *Aldermen*, and *Merchants*, should be only saved; but also that all plain Countrey People should partake of the same means: Who though they read not so many *Gazets* as a *Citizen*, nor concern themselves where the *Turk* or *King of France* sets on next; yet the true knowledge of God is now so plainly delivered in Scripture, that there wants nothing but sober & prudent Offerers of the same, to make it saving to those of the meanest understandings. And therefore in all Parishes, if possible, there ought to be such a fixt and setled Provision, as might reasonably invite some careful and prudent Person, for the Peoples guide and Instruction in holy Matters.

And furthermore: It might be added, that the *Revenue* belonging to most of *Corporation-Livings* is no such mighty businesse: For were it not for the uncertain and humour-some contribution of the well-pleased Parishioners, the *Parson* and his Fami-

Family might be easily starved, for all the *Lands* or Income that belongs to his Church. Besides the great mischief that such kind of hired Preachers have done in the World: which I shall not stay here to insist upon.

And as we have not *Churches* enough, in respect of the great multitude that are qualified for a Living: so considering the smalness of the Revenues, & the number of People that are to be the Hearers, it is very plain that we have too many. And we shall many times find two Churches in the same Yard, when as one would hold double the People of both the Parishes: And if they were united for the encouragement of some deserving Person, he might easily make shift to spend very honestly and temperately the revenue of both. And what though Churches stand at a little further distance? People may please to walk a Mile without discempering themselves: When as they shall go three or four to a Market, to sell two pennies worth of Eggs.

But ſuppoſe they reſolve to pretend, that they ſhall catch cold (the Clouds being more then ordinary thick upon the *Sunday*, as they uſually are, if there be Religion in the caſe) and that they are abſolutely bent upon having inſtruction brought to their own *Town*: Why might not one Sermon a day, or rather then fail one in a fortnight from a prudent and well eſteem'd of Preacher, do as well as two a day from him, that talks all the year long nothing to the purpoſe, and thereupon is laugh'd at and deſpiſed?

I know what people will preſently ſay to this, *viz.* That if upon *Sunday* the Church doors be ſhut, the *Ale houſes* will be open. And therefore there muſt be ſome body, though never ſo weak and lamentable, to paſs away the time in the Church, that the people may be kept ſober and peaceable. Truly, if Religion and the Worſhip of God conſiſted only in Negatives; & that the obſervation of the *Sabbath* was only not to be drunk; then they ſpeak much to the purpoſe

but if it be otherwise, very little. It being not much unlike (as it is the fashion in many places) to the sending of little Children of two or three years old to a *School-Dame*, without any design of learning one Letter, but only to keep them out of the fire and water.

Last of all; People must not say that there needs no great store of Learning in a Minister, and therefore a small Living may answer his deserts; For that there be *Homilies* made on purpose by the Church for young Beginners and slow Inventors. Whereupon it is that such difference is made between giving *Orders* and *License* to Preach; the last being granted only to such as the Bishop shall judge able to make Sermons.

But this do not seem to do the businesse: For though it be not necessary, for every Guide of a Parish to understand all the *Oriental Languages*, or to make exactly elegant or profound discourses for the Pulpit; yet most certainly

tainly it is very requisite that he should be so far learned and judicious, as prudently to advise, direct, inform and satisfie the People in holy matters, when they demand it, or beg it from him. Which, to perform readily and judiciously, requires much more discretion and skill, than upon long deliberation to make a continued talk of an hour, without any great discernable failings. So that were a Minister tyed up never to speak one sentence of his own invention out of the Pulpit in his whole Life-time, yet doubtlesse many other occasions there be, for which neither Wisdom nor Reputation should be wanting in him that has the care and Government of a parish.

I shall not here go about to please my self with the imagination of all the great *Tithes* being restored to the Church, having little reason to hope to see such dayes of vertue. Nor shall I here question the almightiness of former *Kings* and *Parliaments*; nor dispute whether all the *King Henries*

in the World, with never such a powerful *Parliament* were able to determine to any other use what was once solemnly dedicated to God and his Service. But yet when we look over the Prefaces to those *Acts of Parliament*, whereby some Church-Revenues were granted to *Henry* the eighth, one cannot but be much taken with the ingenuity of that *Parliament*. That when the *King* wanted a supply of Money, and an augmentation to his Revenue, how handsomly out of the *Church* they made provision for him, without doing themselves any injury at all; For, say they, seeing His *Majesty* is Our joy and life, seeing that He is so courageous and wise, seeing that He is so very tender of, and well affected to all his Subjects; and He that has been at such large Expences for five and twenty whole years to defend and protect this His Realm; therefore in all duty and Gratitude, and as a manifest token of Our unfeigned thankfulness, We do grant unto

unto the *King* and His Heirs for ever, *&c.* It follows as closely as can be, That because the *King* had been a good and deserving *King*, and had been at much trouble and expence for the safety and honor of the Nation, that therefore all his wants should be supplyed out of the Church: As if all the Charges that He had been at, was upon the account onely of his *Ecclesiastical Subjects*, and not in relation to the rest.

It is not, Sir, for you and I to guess which way the whole Clergy in general might be better provided for. But sure it is, and must not be denied, that so long as many Livings continue, as they now are, thus impoverish'd; and that there be so few encouragements for Men of Sobriety, Wisdom, and Learning, we have no reason to expect much better Instructors and Governours of Parishes, than at present we commonly find.

There is a way, I know, that some people love marvelously to talk of, and that is, a just and equal levelling

of *Ecclesiastical*-Preferments. What a delicate refreshment, say they, would it be, if Twenty or Thirty thousand pounds a year were taken from the *Bishops*, and discreetly sprinkled amongst the poorer and meaner sort of the Clergy? how would it rejoice their hearts, and encourage them in their Office? What need those great and sumptuous Palaces, their City and their Country-houses, their Parks and spatious Waters, their costly Dishes and fashionable Sauces? May not he that lives in a final thatch'd House, that can scarce walk four Rodes in his own ground, that has only read well concerning *Venison*, *Fish*, and *Fowl*; may not he, I say, preach as loud, and to as much purpose, as one of those high and mighty *Spiritualists*? Go to then, seeing it hath pleased God to such a bountiful Provision for his Church in general, what need we be so sollicitous about the amending the low condition of many of the Clergy, when-as there is such a plain remedy

dy at hand, had we but grace to apply it? This Invention pleases some mainly well: But for all the great care they pretend to have of the distressed part of the Clergy, I am confident, one might easily guess what would please them much better; If instead of augmenting small Benefices, the *Bishops* would be pleased to return to them those *Lands* that they purchased in their absence. And then as for the relieving of the Clergy, they would try if they could find out another way.

But are thou in good earnest my excellent Contriver? Dost thou think that if the greatest of our Church-Preferments were wisely parcel'd out amongst those that are in want, it would do much feats and counterfeits? And dost thou not likewise think, that if ten or twenty of the lustiest *Noblemens* Estates of *England* were cleverly sliced among the Indigent, would it not strangely refresh some of the poor *Leiger*, that cry Small-Coal, or grind Scissars? I do suppose that if God should afterwards incline thy

mind (for I phansi it will not be so yet a good while) to be a *Benefactor* to the Church, thy wisdom may possibly direct thee to disperse thy goodnesse in smaller parcels, rather then to flow in upon two or three, with full happinesse. But if it be my inclination to settle upon one *Ecclesiastical* Person, and his successors for ever, a thousand pounds a year; upon condition only to read *the Service of the Church*, once in a week, and you take it ill, and find fault of my prudence, and the method of my munificence; and say, that the stipend is much too large for such a small task: Yet, I am confident, that should I make thy *Laicyship* Heir of such an Estate, and oblige thee only to the trouble and expence of spending a single chicken, or half a dozen of Larks, once a year, in commemoration of me, that thou wouldest count me the wisest Man that ever was since the Creation; And pray to God, never to dispose thy mind, to part with one farthing of it,

for

for any other use than for the service of thy self, and thy Family. And yet, so it is, that because the *Bishops*, upon their first being restored, had the confidence to levy Fines according as they were justly due, and desired to live in their own houses (if not pull'd down) and to receive their own Rents; Presently they cry out the *Church men* have got all the Treasure, and Money of the Nation into their hands. If they have any, let them thank God for it, and make good use of it. Weep not, Beloved, for there is very little hopes, that they will cast it all into the Sea, on purpose to stop the mouths of them, that say the have too much.

What other contrivances there may be for the settling upon Ministers in general a sufficient Revenue for their subsistence, and encouragement in their Office, I shal leave to be considered of by the *Governours* of Learning and Religion. Only, thus much is certain, that so long as the Maintenance

nance of many *Ministers* is so very small, it is not to be avoided, but that a great part of them will want learning, prudence, courage, and esteem to do any good where they live. And what if we have (as by all must be acknowledged) as wise, and learned Bishops, as be in the World; and many others of very great understanding, and wisdom, yet (as was before hinted) unless their be provided for most Towns and Parishes, some tollerable and sufficient Guides; the strength of Religion, and the Credit of the clergy will daily languish more. Nor that it is to be believed, that every small Countrey Parish should be altogether hopeless as to the next Life, unless they have a *Hooker*, a *Chillingworth*, a *Hammond* or a *Sanderson*, dwelling amongst them; but requisite it is, and might be brought about, that some body there should be, to whom the People have reason to attend and to be directed, and guided by him.

I have

I have, Sir, no more to say, were it not that you find the word *Religion* in the Title; of which in particular I have spoken very little: Neither need I, considering how nearly it depends, as to its glory and strength, upon the reputation and mouth of the *Priest*. And I shall add no more but this, viz. that among those many things that tend to the decay of Religion, and of a due Reverence of the *Holy Scriptures*, nothing has more occasion'd it, than the ridiculous & idle discourses that are uttered out of Pulpits. For when the *Gallants* of the World do observe, how the *Ministers* themselves do jingle, quibble, and play the fool with their *Texts*, no wonder if they who are so inclinable to *Atheism* do not only deride and despise the *Priests*, but droll upon the Bible, and make him a mock of all that is sober and sacred. I am,

Sir,

Your most humble Servant.

T. B.

FINIS.